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GP RACING OCTOBER 2021

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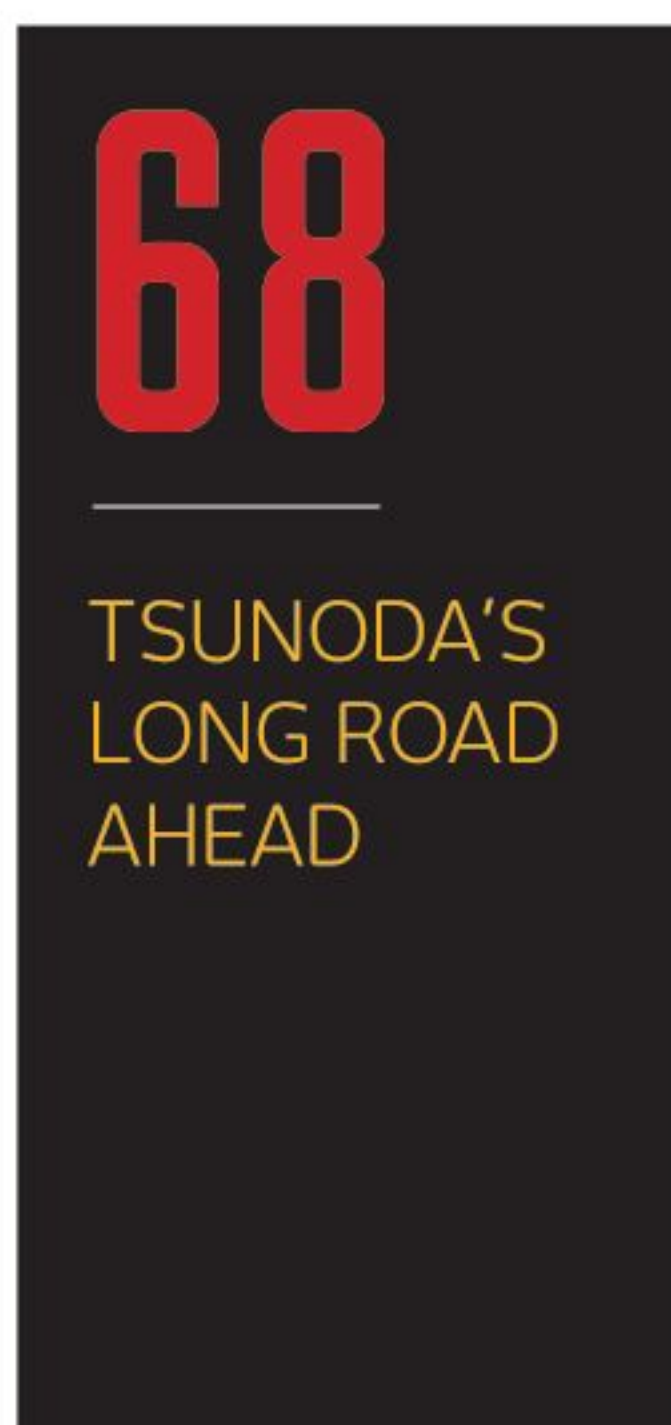
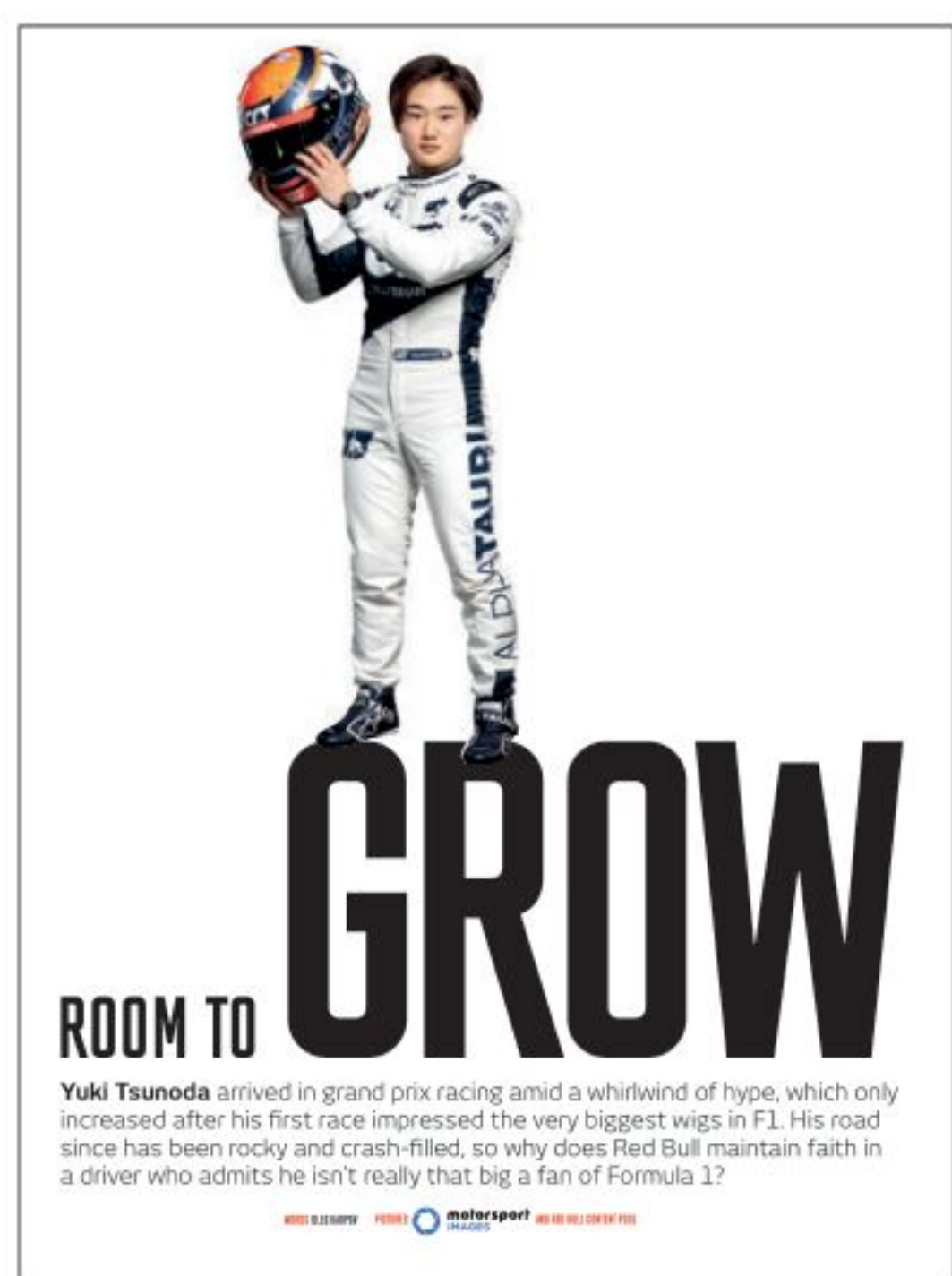
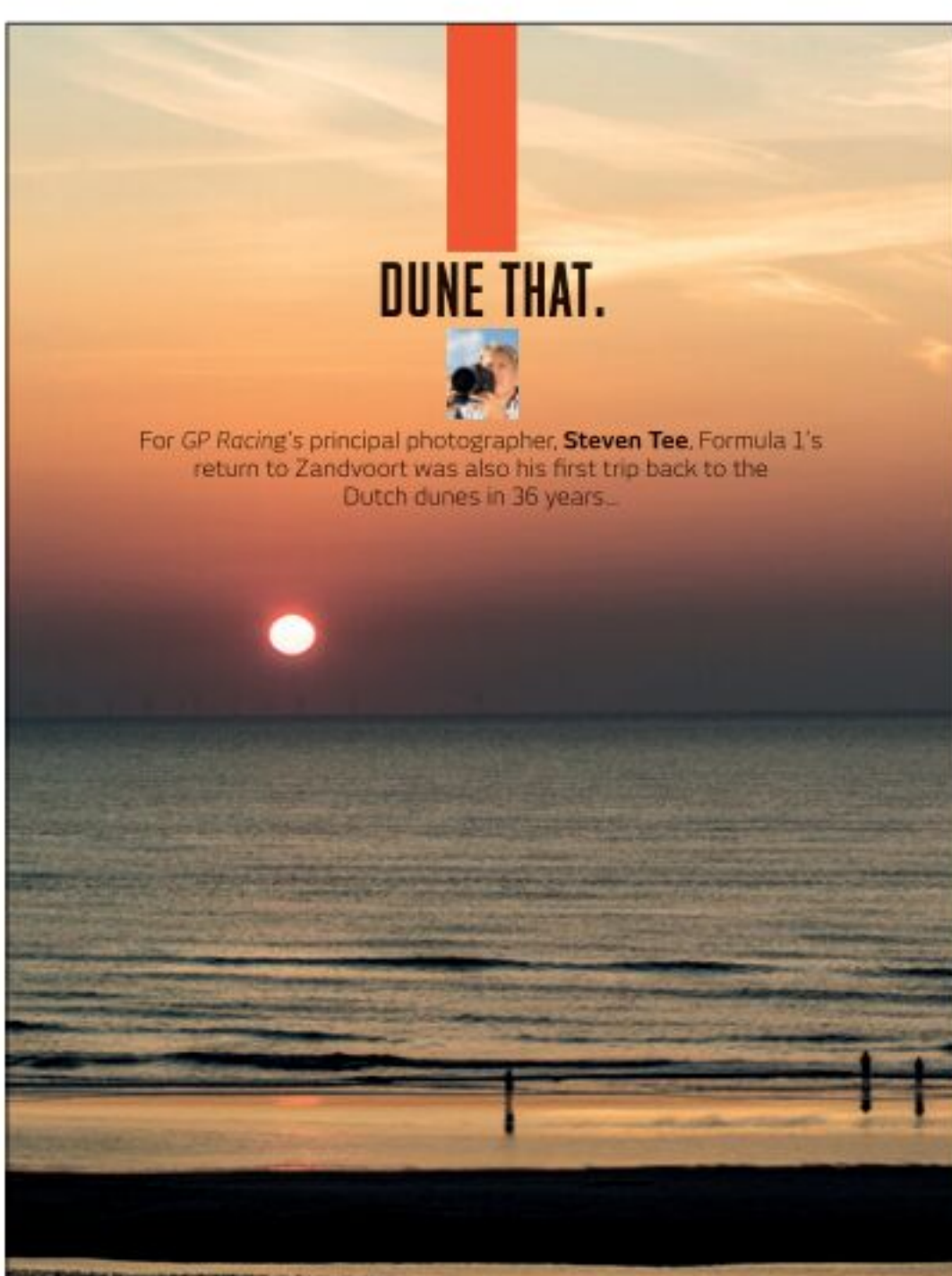
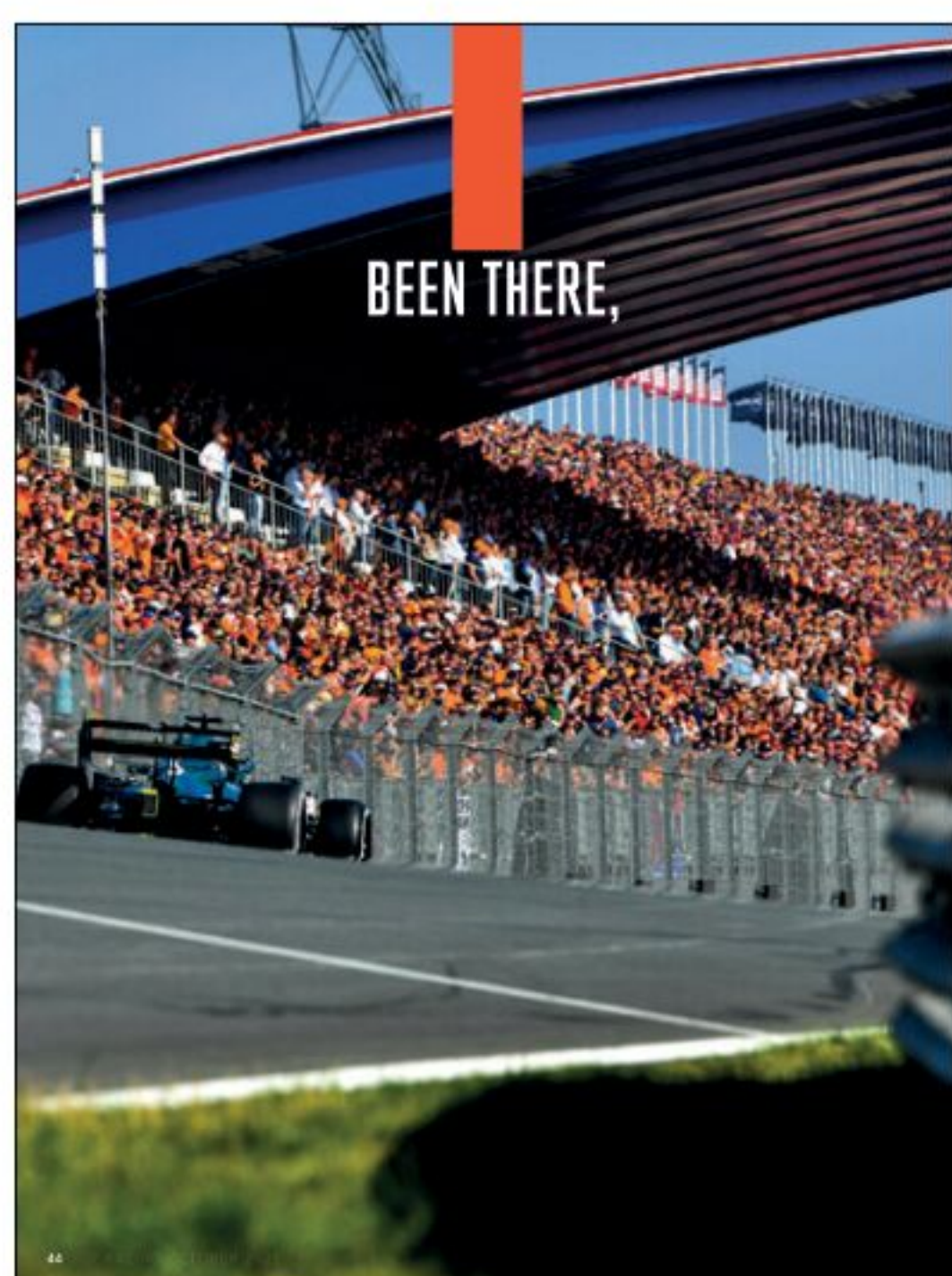
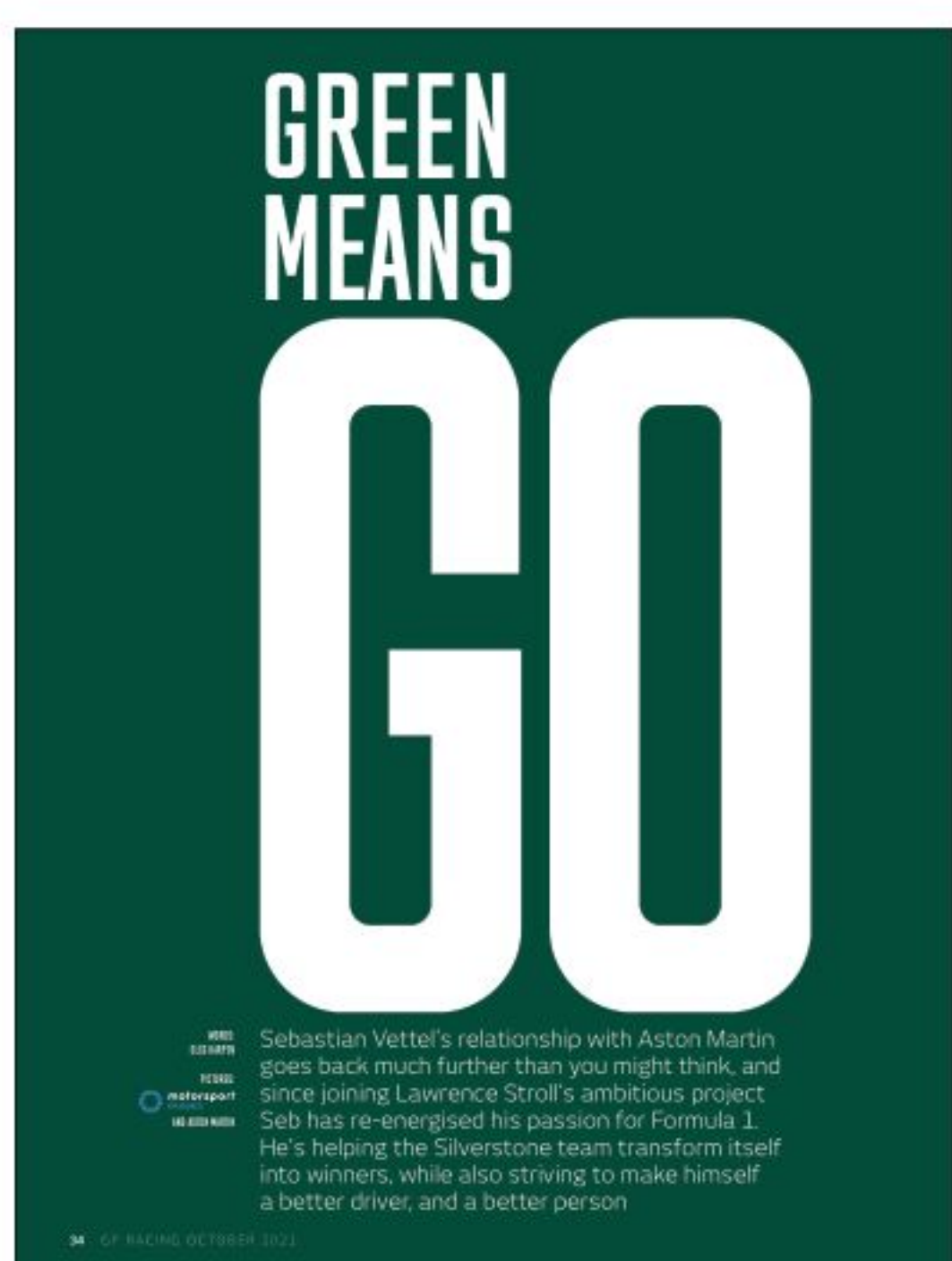
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Ben  
Anderson

@BenAndersonF1



## F1 Sprint format needs a bit of a tweak...

**We've nearly finished** Formula 1's great format experiment of 2021, and now the novelty has worn off and Monza's 'F1 Sprint' (good they've finally settled on the name!) is in the books we can begin to analyse what we're seeing.

I have to say I think it's the right approach to shake up F1's traditional three-day schedule. For too long Friday practice has been a drawn-out boreathon. I know Robert Kubica loves using these sessions to work on finer details of set-up, but you don't need four hours of practice when simulation is so good. Even cutting the total duration by an hour this year, eliminating most of the long-run tyre analysis, has been a step in the right direction.

Having a focal point on each day is sensible, and it's particularly important for race promoters that Friday remains attractive to spectators. The problem with the current trial format is that it has only added to Friday's spectacle by taking away something from Saturday and Sunday.

We now have a weird situation where Friday's 'qualifying' session takes place before final practice, which completely messes with the chronology of the weekend and renders FP2 almost meaningless given parc fermé regulations (no car specification changes allowed) already apply.

Then you have the Sprint itself. In principle, the idea of having a second race to entertain fans and create jeopardy makes complete sense, but the two we've seen so far have been largely dull and

processional. Even Ross Brawn now acknowledges the result should probably not be used to set the grid for the grand prix itself.

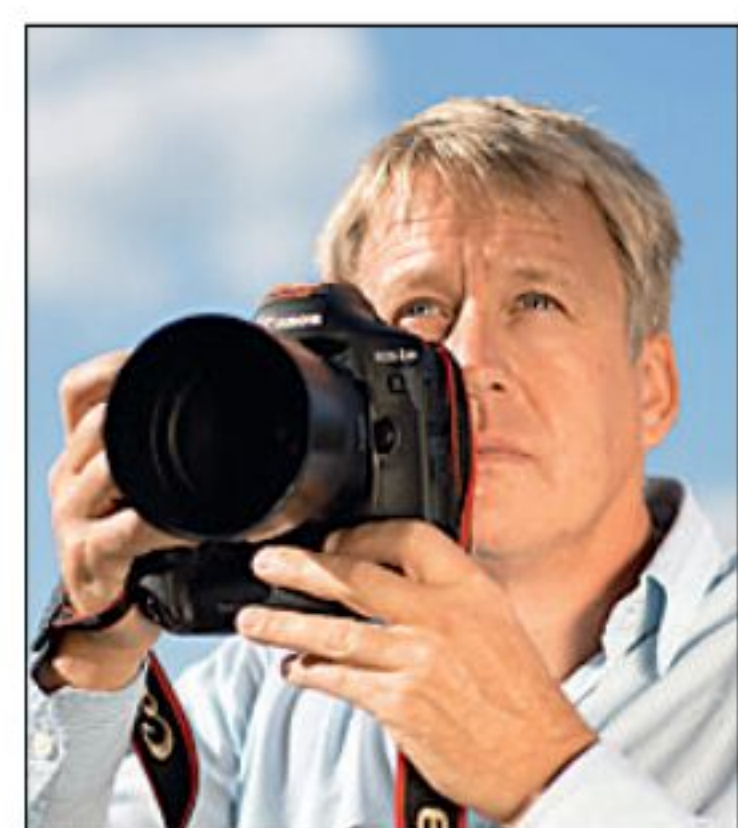
F1 seems to have been surprised by the lack of overtaking, and blindsided by the backlash – including from people within the paddock – at awarding the race winner pole position for the grand prix over the guy who's actually driven faster than everyone else in a qualifying session...

But the main problem is the Sprint just feels like the first stint of the grand prix itself, but brought forward, then red-flagged overnight and restarted from the grid the following day. There's hardly any need to preserve tyres over such short race distances – which already begs the question why anyone starts on anything other than the soft compound when you have free choice – then everyone gets to choose which tyres to start the grand prix on, further homogenising strategies.

F1 is in danger of cannibalising itself here. Something needs to be done about Fridays, while maintaining the integrity of Saturdays and Sundays. Perhaps the solution lies in plans to mandate Friday running for rookies/young drivers in 2022? I propose one free practice/qualifying session and Sprint for them on Fridays; one practice session and qualifying for the main drivers on Saturdays and the grand prix on Sundays.

Now we just need 2022's regulations to create cars that produce exciting racing in the first place...

### Contributors



#### STEVEN TEE

It's a trip down memory lane for our principal photographer as he gives us his thoughts on his first trip to Zandvoort for 36 years (p44)



#### DAMIEN SMITH

Damien speaks to Vanessa Nöcker, one of the makers of the upcoming Schumacher documentary on Netflix, about the film (p56)



#### OLEG KARPOV

Oleg investigates the impact Sebastian Vettel is having at Aston Martin (p34) and Yuki Tsunoda's inconsistent start to his F1 career (p68)



#### STUART CODLING

What news of Codders this month? Well, he's been chatting with McLaren's Zak Brown about the direction the company is taking (p62)

### Team principals

**Editor**  
Ben Anderson  
**President, Motorsport Network**  
James Allen  
**Vice President of editorial**  
James Dickens

### Drivers

**Group managing editor**  
Stewart Williams  
**Executive editor**  
Stuart Codling  
**Art editor**  
Frank Foster  
**Editorial tel**  
+44 (0)20 3405 8100

### Pit crew

**Principal photographer**  
Steven Tee  
**Columnists**  
Pat Symonds  
Mark Gallagher  
Nigel Roebuck  
Ben Edwards

**Photo agency**  
Motorsport Images

**Director, global client success**  
Sunita Davies

**Production controller**  
Ben Webster

### Advertising

**Head of print advertising**  
Ben Fullick  
ben.fullick@autosport.com  
**Sales executives**  
Thomas Howatt  
thomas.howatt@autosport.com  
Kieran Rennie  
kieran.rennie@autosport.com

### Subscriptions

**Email:** help@asm.secureorder.co.uk  
**Customer hotline/back issues**  
0344 848 8826  
**Subscriptions marketing executive**  
Matt Sleight



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You can spray that again, Max

This is Max 'leading' behind the Safety Car during the first attempt to start the Belgian Grand Prix. You can see how excited the strong Dutch contingent among the spectators is – the flares are already starting to go off in the background.

This is the run up to Les Combes and on a dry day you might see cars running three abreast at the start of the race. But on this day, at this point, it was already obvious to me there was no chance of starting the race. The rain had set in and the spray was getting worse. What a shame for Max and his fans that his first F1 win here was the proverbial damp squib.



**Photographer**  
Steven Tee

**Where** Spa, Belgium

**When** 3:25pm, Sunday  
29 August 2021

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII  
70-200mm lens, 1/1000th @ F7.1









## The new power generation

One of my key weekend jobs is to shoot parc ferme and the podium celebrations, and in Belgium that entailed rather a longer wait than expected. In fact, for a while we weren't sure whether there would be a podium ceremony at all...

You could see that in the body language of the drivers. Max had never won a grand prix at Spa-Francorchamps before and, this being one of the classic circuits where the finest drivers thrive, you feel a top-drawer talent like him should be a winner here. Likewise George Russell has all the makings of a grand prix winner but had yet to reach the podium. So it was a bit of a rum do for them to be there after just three laps behind the Safety Car.



**Photographer**  
Mark Sutton

**Where** Spa, Belgium  
**When** 7:03pm, Sunday  
29 August 2021

**Details** Nikon D6  
70-200mm lens, 1/500 @ F2.8



## Not an uphill battle in the dry

This is a classic Spa image and I'm glad I captured it on Friday, when the track conditions worked in its favour. Nobody would have been able to go fast enough on Sunday...

There's a small area for photographers on the left, on the inside apex of the first bit of Eau Rouge. It's a spectacular place to stand even if you're not taking pictures. The change of direction, both horizontal and vertical, really tests the cars and their skid plates kick up great rooster tails of sparks as the suspension compresses when they hit the hill. Panning after them with a relatively slow shutter speed gives a nice graphic effect as well as a sense of the car's sheer speed.



**Photographer**  
Mark Sutton

**Where** Spa, Belgium  
**When** 2:17pm, Friday  
27 August 2021

**Details** Nikon D6  
18-400mm lens, 1/20 @ F13















## Floored on the way to the grid

On race day in Belgium I took myself up to Les Combes because that's a place where things happen – and not necessarily on the first lap. Still, I'm not sure I've ever seen anyone have a shunt there while driving to the grid.

Apparently Sergio Pérez said afterwards that it could have happened to anybody. He's not far wrong. It was a peculiar accident, all at very low speed and not at all spectacular: Pérez just rode over the kerb at a bit of an odd angle and slewed off, a passenger as he slid into the wall. It must have felt awful. Still, I had a job to do, so I fired off this shot of him as he was surveying the damage while the car was being hoisted...



**Photographer**  
Charles Coates

**Where** Spa, Belgium  
**When** 2:30pm, Sunday  
29 August 2021

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII  
70-200mm lens, 1/350th @ F22



## Russell is already making a splash

This is another shot from that first attempt to start the race, taken on the way up the hill, just before they brake for Les Combes. It wasn't as wet at this point as it was later on, but still too wet to race. In the background you can see the wisp of smoke from the stand selling chips and mayonnaise – it must have done a roaring trade.

Despite the lack of light I shot this on a high shutter speed because I wanted to 'freeze' the spray and give a real impression of how difficult conditions were out there. You can really see how it comes off the front wheels and flies up around the halo and into George's face. Then it's hanging in the air for the next car.



**Photographer**  
Steven Tee

**Where** Spa, Belgium  
**When** 3:28pm, Sunday  
29 August 2021

**Details** Canon EOS-1DX MkII  
70-200mm lens, 1/1000th @ F6.3









# BOTTAS TO REPLACE RETIRING RAIKKÖNEN

**01** The 2022 grid is close to complete after a slew of driver announcements during the Spa/Zandvoort/Monza triple-header. Kimi Räikkönen called time on his F1 career, paving the way for Valtteri Bottas to move from Mercedes to Alfa in 2022 – and George Russell to take Valtteri's place.

Meanwhile, Red Bull announced the renewal of Sergio Pérez's contract ahead of the Belgian GP, then sister team AlphaTauri confirmed two days after Zandvoort that Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda will be retained for 2022, while Red Bull facilitated reserve driver Alex Albon becoming Russell's replacement at Williams.

This was the chronological sequence of events, but the key mover in all this was Russell – a driver who was out of contract at Williams and needed to be promoted lest Mercedes risk losing him. Red Bull declared an interest before renewing Pérez's deal, and Russell has shown himself to be a generational talent, in the same strata as Max Verstappen, Charles Leclerc and Lando Norris.

These three are all on long-term deals with Red Bull, Ferrari and McLaren respectively, and now Russell, whose three-season deal with Williams was due to expire at the end of 2021, will test his mettle at Mercedes – against Lewis Hamilton, F1's most successful driver ever.

Russell considers his new team-mate to be "the greatest driver of all time" and spoke of the "steep learning curve" he faces. Equally, here is a driver who almost beat Verstappen to pole in the wet at Spa, losing out only through the final chicane, so Russell will almost certainly test Hamilton to a level he arguably hasn't faced since his rookie season at McLaren, alongside Fernando Alonso.

Hamilton publicly stated his preference for Mercedes to retain Bottas, having enjoyed five seasons working alongside a driver who consistently put the team's interests above his own and caused none of the internal strife seen during Nico Rosberg's era. Promoting a driver of Russell's quality and determination will change the dynamic at Mercedes, which poses risks for management, but also creates potential for Hamilton to be pushed to new heights.

As seen recently at Ferrari, Sebastian Vettel got comfortable racing alongside Räikkönen, then found he couldn't live with Leclerc. Hamilton may well produce a different outcome, but Russell will nevertheless ask fresh questions of the reigning champion.

For Bottas, the opportunity to move to a different team, with quasi-manufacturer support, on a multi-year



PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; STEVE ETHERINGTON; MARK SUTTON; WILLIAMS





2022 moves: Russell (top, left) will replace Bottas (top, right) at Mercedes. Bottas will slide into the seat at Alfa vacated by the retiring Räikkönen (above), while Albon (left) returns to F1 with Williams

agreement, and with the chance to be a team leader rather than ‘wingman’ for Hamilton, represents a sensible next step for a driver who is almost 10 years Räikkönen’s junior, and who can bring a wealth of recent, title-winning team experience to Alfa, helping team boss Fred Vasseur elevate that project to the next level after two seasons of pandemic-induced stagnation.

“If you do the comparison between Lewis and Bottas, the gap is 0.2%,” says Vasseur. “If you look between Max [Verstappen] and his team-mates, it’s three times more, four times, over the last few years. It’s not just speed and performance. It’s a matter of weight into the team. He [Bottas] will bring to the team huge experience accumulated with Mercedes over the last five years.”

The identity of Bottas’ 2022 team-mate is yet to be confirmed. Vasseur insists incumbent Antonio Giovinazzi remains in contention, superb Q3 qualifying performances at Zandvoort and Monza will no doubt aid his cause, but Alfa was known to be talking to Albon before his move to Williams. Vasseur also rates F2 rookie Theo Pourchaire highly, but thinks 2022 would be too much too soon for the Sauber academy driver, who struggled physically during his maiden F1 test at the Hungaroring. F2 rival Guanyu Zhou is also a contender.

Red Bull said Albon’s preference was to replace Russell at Williams, and the energy drinks giant was able to work around Mercedes’ unease at the prospect of a Red Bull-contracted driver racing for a Mercedes-engined team by effectively loaning Albon to Williams in a similar manner to that which gave Esteban Ocon his Renault seat in 2020. “We have released Alex to become a Williams driver in 2022, but retain a relationship with him that includes future options,” a statement

from Red Bull said.

## PROMOTING A DRIVER OF RUSSELL’S QUALITY AND DETERMINATION WILL CHANGE THE DYNAMIC

Toto Wolff had said he would only accept Albon driving for Williams if he first severed ties with Red Bull, a stipulation Christian Horner called “slightly unusual”. “I think Toto understands we are not a B-team and we are not a satellite team,” Williams team boss Jost Capito said. “We have to take decisions that are right for us, and Toto fully

respects that. And he also is fully aware of the capability that Alex has, and is also of the opinion that Alex deserves a seat in F1, so he is supportive.”

Wolff has been pushing Formula E champion Nyck de Vries, but Williams confirmed incumbent Nicholas Latifi will line-up alongside Albon in 2022. Aston Martin and Haas are expected to retain their line-ups, leaving only that second Alfa seat potentially vacant as the F1 driver market closes for business. ►



## F1 CALENDAR HANGS ON TURKEY STATUS

**02** Formula 1 recently published a revised 2021 calendar, but the schedule remains in a state of flux. There are questions over the fate of the US GP at Austin amid the scale of outbreak of coronavirus in Texas and logistical complexities for personnel travelling to the event. However, Turkey remains the biggest headache.

F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali is hopeful the Istanbul race will go ahead on October 10, despite the country's current place on the UK's red zone list for travellers. Currently, around 1000 travelling personnel from the seven British-based teams, plus those of F1, the FIA, Honda, Pirelli and the media, face a compulsory 10-day quarantine in a UK government-approved hotel on their return.

Much now depends on whether Turkey comes off the red list in the British government's next planned review, which was scheduled for September 16, four days after the Italian GP and just after this issue of GP Racing closed for press. F1 issued a revised calendar over the Belgian GP weekend, with several changes intended to smooth the path to the end of the season.

As part of that Turkey was moved from October 3 to October 10, removing a logistical tie to September 26's Russian GP and allowing those travelling to Sochi to book straightforward return flights with no concerns about a late Turkey cancellation. It also buys a week's leeway on any UK government red list decision on Turkey.

There remains the question of how best to get personnel from Turkey to the next round at Austin on October 24. F1 is currently discussing with US authorities how many



**The smooth running of the Turkish GP is a major building block on which a big part of the rest of the 2021 calendar is built**

people will be allowed to enter the country given the stipulation they must be "essential" personnel. F3 has already moved its season finale from Austin to Sochi, citing "unavoidable logistical changes that heavily impacted the overall costs of the planned Austin event". The F1 organisation stressed that the F3 decision had no bearing on plans for the Grand Prix itself.

F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali says that the updated calendar issued at Spa remains solid for the time being. "So far all is what we delivered in terms of information," he told *GP Racing's* sister website *Motorsport.com*. "And so far, it's all stable. So, let's hope there will be no other situations that will get more critical."

The current schedule includes a TBC slot on November 21, and talks about Qatar filling that date are ongoing. FIA F1 race director Michael Masi and F1's sporting director Steve Nielsen visited the Losail track outside Doha after the Hungarian GP and pinpointed what is needed to update facilities for an F1 race.

Among areas understood to have been highlighted were the pit entry, plus barriers and kerbs that are more suitable for motorbike racing than F1 cars. Temporary buildings in the paddock for the use of teams will also need to be upgraded. ►

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# MERCEDES ENGINE QUERIED

**03 Toto Wolff has played** down talk of Mercedes having a ‘special solution’ to help boost engine power. Ahead of the Dutch Grand Prix, it emerged that Red Bull lodged a query with the FIA regarding a design concept it believes Mercedes is running on its current power unit. It is understood Red Bull’s suspicion revolves around Mercedes potentially super-cooling air going through the engine plenum to boost power. Red Bull has noticed that Mercedes appears to have made gains recently in the early acceleration phase after corners.

Article 5.6.8 of the technical regulations states: “Engine plenum air temperature must be more than ten degrees centigrade above ambient temperature.” However, measurement is taken as an average over a lap, discounting the first laps of races, Safety Car laps, laps with a duration of 120% of the fastest in any given session, pit in and out laps, and any other anomalous laps.

Wolff said: “It is the modus operandi in F1: business as usual. Queries are being taken to the FIA, questions are being asked, it’s completely normal.”

Red Bull team boss Christian Horner agreed teams asking questions of the FIA regarding rivals is to be expected. “As is the nature with all technical clarifications, they go continually between all the teams,” he said. “Those clarifications are usually to ascertain if something is, in the eyes of the governing body, acceptable as a solution and then of course if it is you follow suit. We’ve had numerous of those this year with our car. I’m sure it doesn’t come as any great surprise.”

Mattia Binotto revealed Ferrari has also discussed Mercedes’ engine performance, but hasn’t escalated those concerns. “We are always trying to understand what the others are doing by pictures, looking at data, look[ing] at GPS,” he said. “We had some question marks, we discussed the points with Red Bull, I discussed it with Christian Horner, but we have not as Ferrari raised any questions with the FIA, so far at least.”

**Questions about the recent gains Mercedes is perceived to have made have focused on a power unit boost**



**“IT IS THE MODUS OPERANDI IN F1: BUSINESS AS USUAL. QUERIES ARE BEING TAKEN TO THE FIA, QUESTIONS ARE BEING ASKED, IT’S COMPLETELY NORMAL”**

**TOTO WOLFF**

# F1 MASTERMIND

Your chosen specialised subject:  
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- Q1** How many GPs have been held in Abu Dhabi prior to 2021: 8, 10 or 12?
- Q2** Which three drivers have shared all seven Russian GP wins between them?
- Q3** Which Australian world champion started more F1 GPs: Alan Jones or Jack Brabham?
- Q4** What comes next in Robert Kubica’s F1 career: BMW, Renault, Mercedes and...?
- Q5** Who was the last driver to follow up his maiden F1 win with another victory at the next race?
- Q6** At which GP did Valtteri Bottas claim his first F1 win for Mercedes?
- Q7** True or false: Nigel Mansell, Martin Brundle, Derek Warwick and Jonathan Palmer were the only British drivers to start the 1985 Dutch GP?
- Q8** The Belgian GP both started and finished under the Safety Car, but which was the last race before this to finish under a Safety Car?
- Q9** How many starts did Kimi Räikkönen make in his first F1 career from 2009, before he left to go rallying: 144, 155 or 170?
- Q10** Which two current drivers made their debuts in the two years (2010/11) Kimi was away from F1?



1 12 Lewis Hamilton, Valtteri Bottas and Nico Rosberg  
3 Jack Brabham (126 to 116) 4 Ferrari (F1 engines he has  
raced) 5 Charles Leclerc 6 2017 Russian GP 7 True 8 2020  
Bahrain GP 9 155 10 Daniel Ricciardo, Sergio Pérez



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# THE F1 ANALYST

BEN EDWARDS

 @benedwardstv

PICTURES  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

## RICCIARDO FLIES OVER A BUMP IN THE ROAD

**Having burst back** on to the top of the podium at Monza just after completing his 200th grand prix start at Spa, Daniel Ricciardo has completely revamped his season and potentially his whole career. Early next year he will pass Mark Webber's existing record for the most starts for an Australian and his success in Italy meant a deep breath of relief after a troubling time earlier in the season.

In the first 10 races of the year, he outqualified his team-mate Lando Norris on just three occasions and scored under half of Lando's points tally. The gap in qualifying was the biggest average loss he has suffered in his career; in 2018 he lost out to Max Verstappen by just 0.14s across 18 representative qualifying sessions, then decided to move to Renault. The advantage swung in Daniel's favour over Nico Hülkenberg by a minimal margin, while he topped Esteban Ocon across the 2020 season by 0.15s. So the deficit of 0.273s to Norris in the first part of 2021 was a real blow to a competitor of Ricciardo's experience and talent.

Daniel's Monza performance proved he has

the depth in him to overcome this glitch, but that poor early season display would still have been a real jolt. For a driver who pulled off some brilliant late-braking overtakes in a Red Bull, his lack of confidence in the McLaren when braking hasn't helped. The car also counters his natural technique of carrying high entry speed into a corner on a qualifying lap, something that the aerodynamic profile of the MCL35M does not encourage.

Back home some of his fans have also suffered, as Australian broadcaster and journalist Michael Lamonato told me: "The early part of the season was a bit of a gut punch because Daniel had so much momentum last year. A couple of podiums in his second year at Renault made people feel like he was on to something and then the change to McLaren resonated deeply with many Australian F1 fans. But to see he's effectively been nowhere and being beaten by a guy so much younger has opened some wounds from the Webber/Vettel era. Some fans feel his opportunities may pass him by if he can't rise up to Lando's level."

Ricciardo is up against a talented youngster who is totally at one with a car which has been developed around him; Lando Norris joined the team at the perfect time, as it re-set itself from a disappointing first year with Renault power and engaged crucial personnel such as technical director James Key and team principal Andreas Seidl. The revamp included an entirely new driver line up, switching from Fernando Alonso and Stoffel Vandoorne to Norris and Carlos Sainz.

For Lando, a champion in junior categories such as Formula Renault and FIA Formula 3, it has worked well.

Junior champions often have that soaring ability to rise even higher when reaching the top echelon, but not all of them reconfigure for F1. Vandoorne was a key example; a champion in Formula Renault, he was runner-up to Jolyon Palmer in his rookie season of GP2 before confirming that ability by winning the title a year later. Yet F1 didn't quite work for him and his exploits are now seen elsewhere.

So what are the chances for another junior category multiple winner who is within sight of becoming the next Formula 2 champion? Oscar Piastri could become the 15th Australian to race in F1 since 1950. He has an Italian family background like Ricciardo but was brought up in the metropolitan area of Melbourne, a multicultural environment that probably helped him cope with karting in Europe from the age of 15.

Piastri switched to British Formula 4 in 2017, taking the runners-up spot to Jamie Caroline in the year that Billy Monger suffered his life changing accident at Donington Park. In 2018 Piastri moved

to Eurocup Formula Renault, winning the title a year later before going on to win the prestigious FIA F3 series in the final round of 2020 at Mugello in a nail biting showdown.

Now he is part of the Prema team in Formula 2, having taken over Mick Schumacher's seat alongside the driver that I thought might dominate the series in 2021 – Robert Shwartzman. The Russian was a major contender in his rookie campaign of last year but despite that experience Piastri managed to outqualify Shwartzman at three of the first four events, and the only time he qualified behind him was when they ran in separate sessions in Monaco.

After taking pole position for the feature race at Silverstone and backing it up with three solid results, Piastri took over the lead of the championship in what is still a very unpredictable series.

He's a young man with talent and some excellent connections; managed by Mark Webber, he was taken on board by the young driver programme of Alpine at the beginning of 2020. At 20 years old, Piastri is well positioned to eventually break into the top level, especially if he repeats the Charles Leclerc and George Russell trick of consecutive GP3/F3 and F2 titles.

While seats in F1 are hard to come by, the fact that Piastri also won his main race at Monza proves that Australian racing drivers are going to be a factor in the highest level of motorsport for a long time to come.



Ricciardo has admitted he needed the summer break to reset after a tough start to his McLaren career



Ricciardo claimed two podiums in his second season with Renault, but initially struggled in his first season at McLaren



Ricciardo's win at Monza, the eighth victory of his F1 career, couldn't have come at a better time for the Australian



Despite those early on-track struggles, Ricciardo has fitted in well at McLaren



Piastri is hoping to follow up his 2020 F3 title with the F2 crown this year, and he could well be the next Australian in Formula 1





# UNDER THE HOOD

PAT SYMONDS

PICTURES  **motorsport**  
IMAGES

## HOW PITSTOPS BECAME SO HIGH SPEED

**How long has it taken you** to read this sentence? There are many ways of expressing time and you might answer 'just under three seconds' or you might say 'a little longer than the Red Bull team generally takes to change all four wheels on one of its cars at a pitstop. In Hungary, Red Bull set its fastest time of the season, completing a tyre-change in just 1.88 seconds.

So fast are F1 pitstops now that the FIA has had its interest awakened and has issued further directives on what is regarded as acceptable practice, explaining how much automation can be used and what human intervention is necessary to ensure safety takes precedence over speed.

So how is this achieved and how is the balance between technology and human performance managed? If we go back in time, we can see that while pitstops have been intrinsic in motorsport for many years, for a long time the role they played in competitiveness was overlooked. Pre-war pitstops could take over 30 seconds. In the modern era the organised pitstop really emerged in the early

combined with precision stopping within 10cm of the desired spot, fast reactions to the signal to go and a good launch, all carved those vital tenths from the procedure.

In terms of equipment, the pitstop guns came in for attention first. These are air-driven impact wrenches specifically designed for large nuts. It was soon found that the original design could be improved by gas-flowing all the ports much like an engine's cylinder head. Before it was regulated that only air or nitrogen could be used to power the guns, other gases were adopted that showed lower viscosity and hence drove the guns faster. The guns themselves were also lightened and custom grips made, individually shaped for each mechanic to achieve

the best ergonomic performance.

Jacks were next looked at with simple quick-lift jacks replaced by quick-release items that collapsed at the touch of a button to save time in lowering the car. Onboard jacks such as are used in sportscars were investigated but were always outperformed by a well-operated external jack.

The pitstop area was also improved by painting graduated markings on the ground around the stopping area. Overhead cameras were installed in gantries so video could be examined to determine how accurate the drivers were at stopping on the mark. Any error forces the gunman to rotate, which loses time and increases the chances of not getting a clean hit on the wheel nut, which can damage it and lead to cross-threading.

Wheels, wheel nuts and axles changed considerably to assist rapid stops. In the early days the wheels were driven by drive pegs on the axle which engaged in elongated holes in the wheel. It was found to be much quicker to lock the wheel to the axle using a serrated drive, which was easier to engage as it was not so reliant on exact indexing of the wheel and axle. The axle threads also changed considerably, from relatively fine threads to ones with a pitch of over 1mm to clamp with the minimum number of turns.

The materials too were investigated, as the nuts needed many compromising attributes. Too soft and they would be cleaved by the axle thread if not square, and too brittle it could be damaged by the gun. In addition, they had to maintain strength at very high temperatures. Even now there are ►



**Brabham's introduction of strategic refuelling in 1982 meant that speed changing wheels wasn't a priority**

1980s when Brabham introduced refuelling and the pitstop became a strategic part of the race.

When refuelling was reintroduced in 1994, a limit on fuel flow rate meant that changing wheels was a relatively leisurely affair, but when refuelling was banned again in 2010 wheel changing agility returned to prominence.

In this period, the art evolved from one of just continual practice with primitive equipment to a holistic view that combined focused practice with a leap in technology for wheel guns, jacks and even wheel nuts and axles. The drivers too came to realise the role they played, so getting maximum safe braking performance into the pit area



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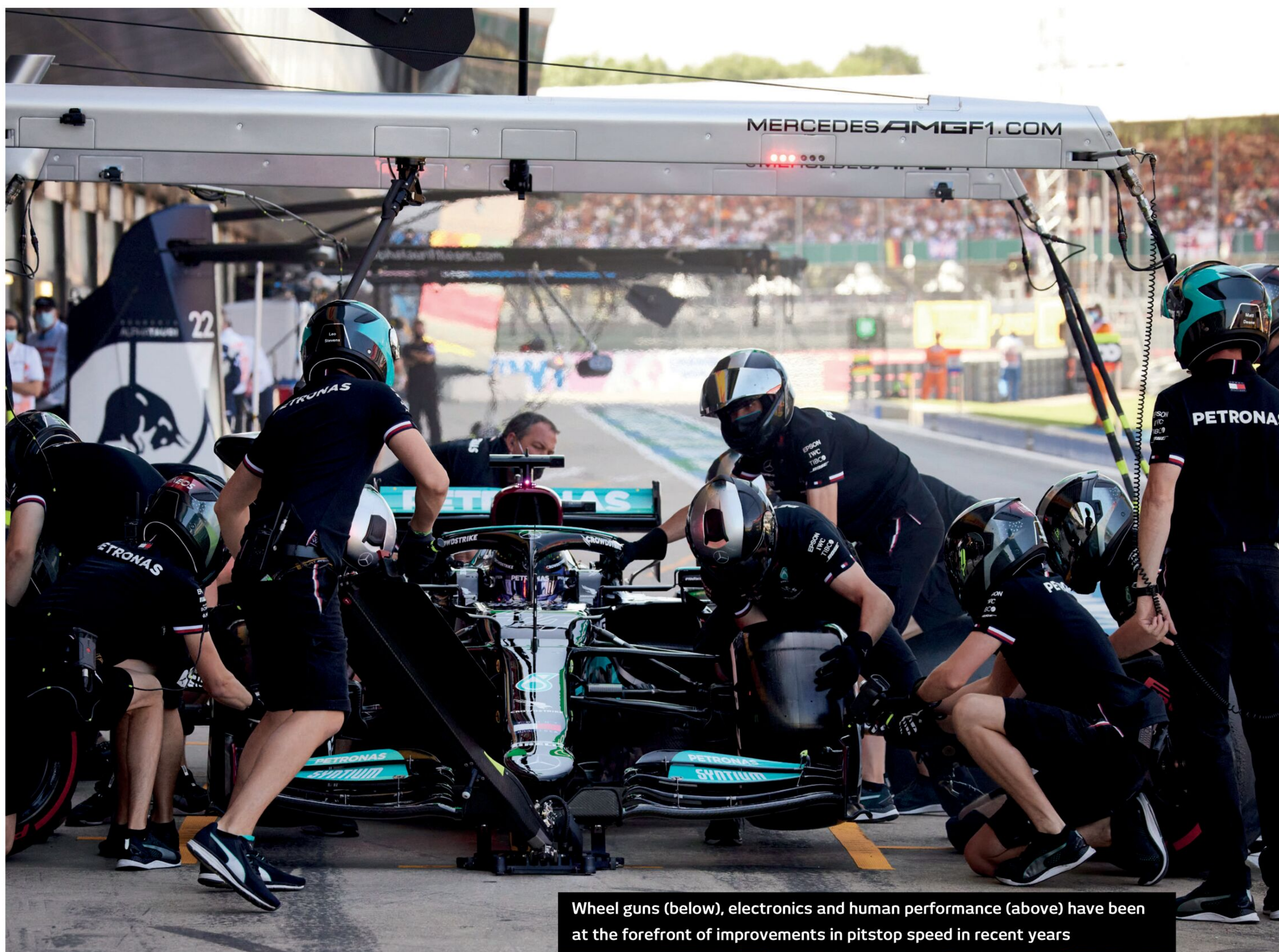


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Wheel guns (below), electronics and human performance (above) have been at the forefront of improvements in pitstop speed in recent years

different solutions in the pitlane, but the use of titanium axles with sophisticated aluminium wheel nuts probably holds sway.

One of the biggest improvements was to use electronics to link these mechanical improvements together and it is this that has caused the FIA concern. A computer monitors sensors on all the devices. It knows when the car is in the air, when the wheels are removed and when the wheel nuts are once again tight. At one time this computer would release the jacks and change the pitstop light from red to green based on a signal from all four wheel guns. With the latest guidelines from the FIA, a manual signal from the gun operator must be given before the jack sequence can start and this signal must be based on a physical indication and physical acknowledgement from the wheel gun operator.

One must not forget the human performance aspect as well. When I was at Williams, we were the best in the pitlane at pitstops but we didn't just train senselessly. We had an automated pitstop rig in the



## ONE OF THE BIGGEST IMPROVEMENTS WAS TO USE ELECTRONICS TO LINK THESE MECHANICAL IMPROVEMENTS TOGETHER

factory that was fully instrumented to train the mechanics on, and the whole process was overseen by a sports scientist/osteopath to extract maximum performance from our ace mechanics. Finally, a 20-page report was written for each event, even if there had only been a single pitstop for each car in the race, and this was analysed and discussed in detail to seek the incremental improvements that are so necessary for peak performance.

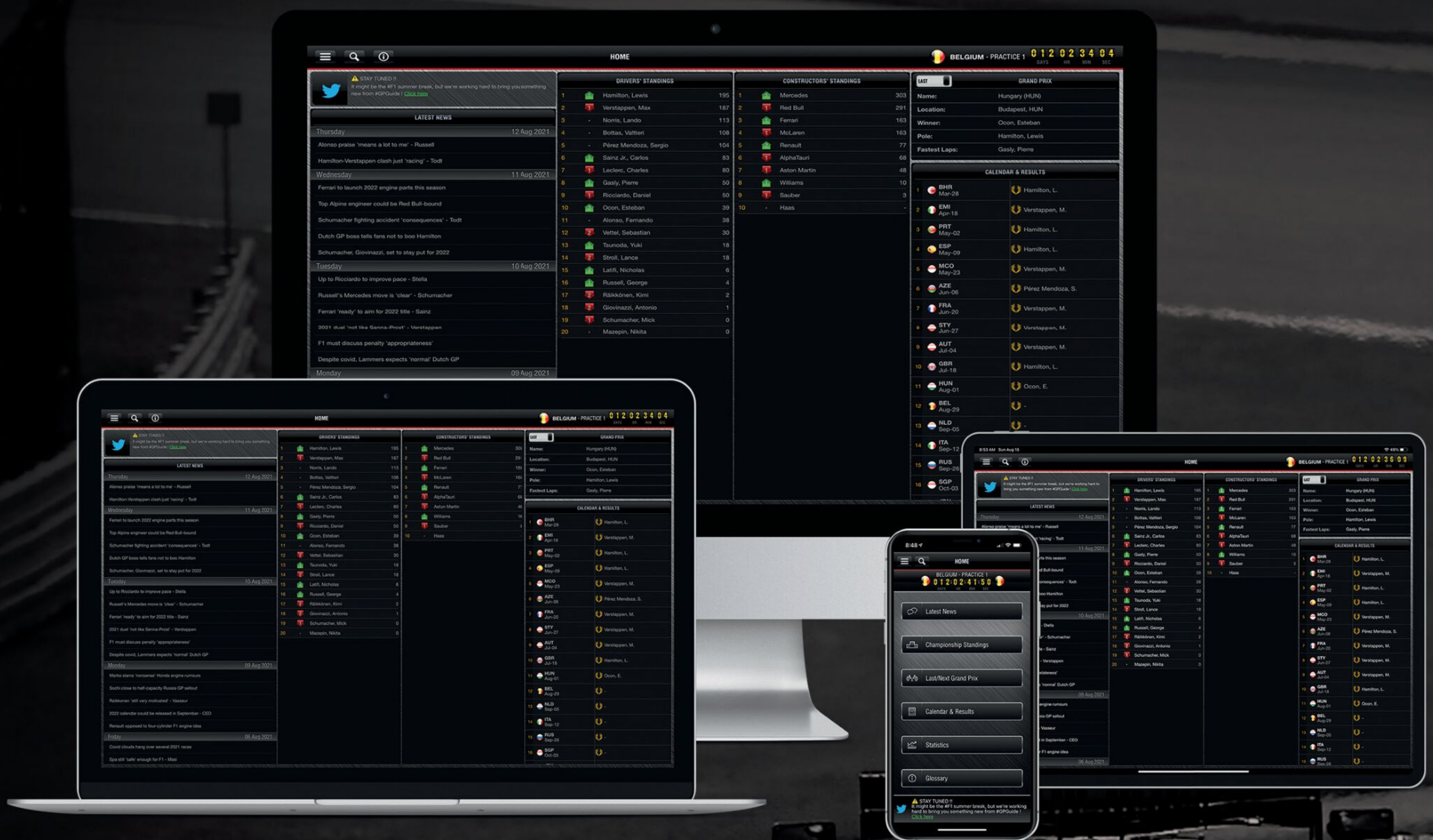


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# STRAIGHT TALK

MARK GALLAGHER  
 @\_markgallagher

lockdowns, was facing the consequences of a federal government lacking in urgency when it came to getting people jabbed.

Australia's vaccination 'stroll out' meant that by 6 July, the date on which the Melbourne race was cancelled for a second time, a mere 7.7% of the population were fully vaccinated. On the same date, the UK could report 51.3% of its population double jabbed, a key factor in enabling a fully subscribed British Grand Prix to take place.

At the time of writing Australia is facing a surge in COVID cases. The delta variant is tightening its grip in Sydney and lockdowns are being extended. Under normal circumstances the freight should be leaving for Melbourne 2022 in 26 weeks – the blink of an eye in 'pandemic time'. Given the government is reluctant to open the borders until 80% of the population is fully vaccinated, yet won't fix a date, Australian GP CEO Andrew Westacott must already fear the prospect of a third cancellation next season.

China, Singapore, Japan and Canada have joined Australia in cancelling their races for a second year. Confidence remains high that the US GP will go ahead, despite a delta-driven surge in cases

and deaths there, but significant questions persist regarding Mexico and Brazil. The USA had fully vaccinated well over half its population by the end of August, but Mexico and Brazil were lagging well behind at less than a quarter. Worse still, hospitalisation rates are high and Mexico's death rate is the fourth highest in the world at 7.8%.

While the promoters in China and Singapore battened down the hatches and Vietnam's event sank without trace, Suzuka rolled over in the face of government restrictions on travel and spectator attendance.

Meanwhile, Canada's promoter decided to sell up. With a growing public and media outcry over slow ticket refunds from 2020, promoter Octane Racing Group, headed by Francois Dumontier, was sold to telecommunications and media giant Bell Canada in April. 'Financial stability' and 'investment' were the key words in the press statement, suggesting that things were far from rosy after two years of silence on the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve.

Dumontier told me at the end of 2020 that a second cancellation would be problematic, and so it proved. Fortunately, Bell's deep pockets and commitment to F1 through its broadcasting rights on the TSN and RDS TV channels saved the day.

It can only be imagined how fast some of the other promoters must be paddling to keep their heads above water until normality returns.

## THE TOUGHEST OF TIMES FOR F1'S RACE PROMOTORS

**When Formula 1 announced** its 'record breaking' 22-race calendar for 2020 back in August of 2019, none of us could have anticipated the seismic events that would overtake sport. It's been an other-worldly, Hollywoodesque experience.

Two years later, the world is a different place. While it is tempting for those fortunate enough to be double vaccinated to sit back and enjoy one of Formula 1's greatest duels, it can feel like indulgent escapism.

A great deal of misery has ensued. Fans and industry figures alike have lost their lives. For some, the question arises as to whether they may ever see F1 visit their shores again.

That was the very question put to me by *Sky News Australia* following July's announcement that the Grand Prix in Melbourne, cancelled in 2020 and then postponed to later this year, was again being deleted from the schedule.

A country which had eliminated COVID in the community through border closures, mandatory hotel quarantines and a series of short, sharp



**Australia (top) and Canada (above) have been missing from the F1 calendar for two years due to COVID. Canada's promoters decided to sell to ensure the future of the event**



# RÄIKKÖNEN'S ROAD CAR LEGACY

Alfa Romeo's hottest model has been finessed by none other than the soon-to-retire Kimi Räikkönen. Can you resist?

WORDS ROBERT HOLMES  
PICTURES ALFA

**Kimi Räikkönen might be** about to retire from Formula 1 but his influence will persist well after the wails of anguish from his legion of fans has subsided. Räikkönen and team-mate Antonio Giovinazzi helped hone Alfa Romeo's new Giulia GTA and GTAm performance cars which were developed in collaboration with Sauber Engineering, whose F1 team runs under Alfa Romeo branding. Thus Räikkönen's Formula 1 career really has come full circle: the aerodynamic appendages on the GTA and GTAm are designed and built by Sauber, using the windtunnel which was paid for by the cash McLaren and Mercedes forked over 20 years ago to release Kimi from his Sauber contract.

While Alfa Romeo's 'third coming' in F1 remains baffling to some, it made perfect sense to the architect of the deal, the late Sergio Marchionne. In 2014 Marchionne set in motion plans to separate Ferrari from Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and float it on the New York Stock Exchange. Ferrari is now a listed company whereas Alfa Romeo is one of many brands in the new corporate group known as Stellantis, the company formed last January through the merger of FCA with Peugeot's parent company.

Alfa's F1 cars might carry a lot of Ferrari



Räikkönen (right) and Alfa team-mate Giovinazzi have had input into the Sauber Engineering tweaks to the GTA and GTAm

design DNA and plenty of Ferrari components, but this is a commercial deal and the company's F1 presence is intended to position it as a 'halo brand' within the bustling Stellantis portfolio. It was almost inevitable the F1 organisation would be brought in to wave a magic wand over a road car model, though the Giulia GTA and its even racier sibling are somewhat fiercer than, say, the Lotus Cortina of the 1960s or even the Lotus Carlton of the 1980s.







The Giulia is a revival of a model from the Italian manufacturer's eclectic back catalogue. Alfa describes the Giulia GTA as "technically and conceptually inspired" by the 1965 Giulia *Gran Turismo Alleggerita* which was developed by Autodelta, the company co-founded by former Ferrari engineer Carlo Chiti and which became Alfa's de facto competition department.

Alfa has taken the Giulia Quadrifoglio – previously the lightest Giulia variant – and stripped out 100kg by replacing more of the structure with carbonfibre. In addition to the Quadrifoglio's composite bonnet and wings, the GTA has a carbonfibre front bumper (mind how you go in the multi-storey), roof, rear wheelarch extensions and bootlid. The hardcore GTAm loses a further 40kg even though it comes with a rollcage: the rear doors are plastic, the windows polycarbonate, the seats carbonfibre, and nylon loops replace the inner doorhandles.

The centrelock wheels are clearly race-inspired, while Räikkönen and Giovinazzi worked with Alfa's engineers to refine the new package of springs, bushes and shocks, and 50mm wider track, at Alfa's Balocco proving ground near Turin. A dramatic-looking Akrapovic titanium twin-pipe exhaust is among the modifications which lifts power from the 2.9-litre twin-turbo 90-degree V6 from 503bhp to 533bhp, driving the rear wheels through the same eight-speed semi-automatic transmission.

Sauber's contribution was to design (and build, using rapid-prototyping techniques) the front and rear wings and side skirts, as well as shaping the underbody into an F1 diffuser-style arrangement with downforce-boosting fins and flicks. The GTAm is claimed to produce 300kg of downforce, twice that of the GTA model and three times that of the Quadrifoglio. Not only is the front wing driver-adjustable through a 40mm arc, it's also been shaped to expedite the flow of cooling air to the radiator, enabling the engine modifications – new conrods, more aggressive turbo and ignition mapping, racier oil system – which have yielded more power.

Our former colleagues on *Autocar* magazine describe the GTAm as "arguably Alfa Romeo's finest road car to date". But you'll need to move quickly: only 500 examples each will be made, and their provenance means they're likely to be snapped up, even if the prices (£152,000 for the GTA, £156,000 for the GTAm) might make even Kimi say "Bwoah".



# GREEN MEANS

# GO

WORDS:  
OLEG KARPOV

PICTURES:  
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AND ASTON MARTIN

Sebastian Vettel's relationship with Aston Martin goes back much further than you might think, and since joining Lawrence Stroll's ambitious project Seb has re-energised his passion for Formula 1. He's helping the Silverstone team transform itself into winners, while also striving to make himself a better driver, and a better person







# REMEMBER THE BUZZ

about “a secret meeting” between Sebastian Vettel and Otmar Szafnauer last summer?

A four-time world champion, left a free agent by Ferrari, was spotted in a parking lot at the Silverstone circuit jumping in the car belonging to the boss of the soon-to-be Aston Martin team, just a few hundred meters away from its factory.

In a peak period of a Formula 1 silly season, it was seen as a clear sign: these two are edging closer to making a deal.

It did eventually happen. Vettel moved to Aston Martin for 2021. But on that particular occasion it was just a chance meeting between two old friends. Seb didn't hop into Otmar's car to sign a contract.

In fact, these two had already signed one by that time. Well, sort of...

“I met Sebastian, gosh, I can't remember when...” Szafnauer exhales, trying to reconstruct the circumstances of his first meaningful meeting with Sebastian in a chat with *GP Racing*. “[It happened] when he was in between contracts with BMW and Red Bull. Long, long time ago.”

It was in 2007, in the restaurant of a small hotel, Hüllen, in a place called Barweiler, around eight kilometres away from the Nürburgring. Vice President of Honda Racing Developments Szafnauer met young BMW Sauber test driver Vettel and a couple of other Germans – BMW hospitality chef Joschi Walch, who became a long-time friend of Sebastian and his family, and Michael Schmidt, a veritable guru of the German motorsport media. They had dinner together and shared some drinks. It was around the time Vettel was deciding whether to leave BMW and accept Red Bull's offer to drive for Toro Rosso.

“It was, I think, already decided,” recalls Schmidt. “It was, let's say, almost like an open secret that he is going there. We knew something was going on, because BMW said, “we cannot keep you unless you are a test driver” and he didn't want to be a test driver. And we were joking that night: ‘We do the contract now, here.’ So we took that carton thing you put your beer on, and everybody signed it. Sebastian signed it, Otmar, me, Joschi. That was his contract to drive in F1.”

Later Szafnauer, who worked with Honda for almost a decade, organised a dinner in Tokyo after the Japanese Grand Prix at a restaurant called Mon cher ton ton in the Roppongi district, inviting now-Toro Rosso driver Vettel, Schmidt

and one of the leading Honda F1 engineers Takeo Kiuchi for a Teppanyaki.

“Kiuchi,” Otmar says, “was Ayrton Senna's engine engineer at Honda back in the day. He told us stories about Senna coming to his house with his girlfriend. And Senna's girlfriend didn't speak English or Japanese and Kiuchi's wife only spoke Japanese. So the translation for the two ladies to talk was Senna's girlfriend telling Senna, Senna then in English telling Kiuchi [to translate] in Japanese to his wife.”

No wonder Seb, being a huge fan of F1 and its history, loved such stories and enjoyed the company. The group rallied and kept those meetings up as annual events, gathering together – with attendees varying – at race weekends for the next several years.

“As a young guy I thought he was super nice,” says Szafnauer of Sebastian. “Ambitious, he wanted to do well, wanted to be a complete racing driver, which he still wants to be today He's a good friend. He's an honest guy. He's a genuine person. It's just the type of friend that you want.”

Eventually the tradition lapsed. “I mean, he was always busy. I was busy,” explains Szafnauer. But their friendship meant Otmar and Sebastian certainly had no need in a planned parking lot meeting to sign something, something more meaningful than a cardboard coaster.







PICTURES: GLENN DUNBAR

## PUSHED BEFORE HE COULD JUMP?

Vettel arrived at Aston Martin after two difficult seasons with Ferrari in 2019-2020, when he was overshadowed by Charles Leclerc. Seb knew his contract with Ferrari wouldn't be renewed even before last season started, and Szafnauer's team became his only viable option to stay in F1 to compete at a serious level.

"I think he started to get a little bit tired after the two lost championships in '17 and '18," says Schmidt. "And he couldn't really see a bright future. I think in the end, if it had to be his decision whether to stay [at Ferrari] or not, maybe he would have even decided by himself not to stay. Because he kind of didn't believe in them anymore."

"He had problems with setting up the Ferrari his way. You know, he's one of the old-style drivers, who is turning in and braking at the same time, and the Ferrari in a way developed more, let's say, to the direction of Leclerc, who brakes and then turns in."

"Ferrari fell in love with Leclerc, because they saw that's the future. Seb is the older one, he's more and more struggling with these tyres, with

the car or whatever. And then obviously Seb realised that his time was over. But the decision was taken by Ferrari. He was caught by surprise when [Ferrari team principal Mattia] Binotto said, you know, "we don't need you anymore", more or less."

But Aston Martin wasn't just a last resort for Vettel. It is now probably the fastest-growing team on the grid, with announcements of new signings in the management and technical structure coming one after another.

"He wanted to know about the team, what the team was like, what our ambitions were, did our ambitions match his ambitions," says Otmar of the Vettel negotiations. "After four world championships you look for different things."

"And the further we talked, the more he said, 'you know, I want to be part of this, of what you're starting here, and it looks like our ambitions for the future are aligned'."

"But also he wanted to have fun in racing again. We too are a team of racers, that just want to go racing and do the best we can. All that stuff aligned. And so he said, 'yeah, I want to join'."

## COMPROMISED PREPARATION

Did Vettel's expectations match the reality? Probably not 100%. As the start of the season showed, changing F1 teams during a pandemic isn't the easiest exercise. Not only Vettel, but also Daniel Ricciardo, Sergio Pérez, even Fernando Alonso all struggled, at least at the beginning.

Coronavirus-related restrictions definitely didn't help Vettel get acquainted with the team at the outset. Virtual conference rooms just aren't the best place for that.

"It was in January," recalls Szafnauer of Sebastian's first factory visit. "It was unfortunately in the height of COVID. So it was difficult... You know, everybody had to wear a mask, we had [to do] a test and all that stuff. Normally he would come to the factory and then go see everybody. He couldn't do any of that."

The fact F1 limited itself to just three pre-season test days also wasn't in Vettel's favour – especially given that for much of the track time designated for him the AMR21 was in the pits in a state of undress due to mechanical issues.

"We only had three days of testing in the winter, and of these three days we probably lost a day and a half," says Vettel's new boss. "And Sebastian lost most of it. So he really didn't have any winter testing."

"All his acclimatisation to the car and to the differences had to be on race weekends, which is harder to do, because you want to get acclimatised ►





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**ASTON MARTIN WASN'T JUST A LAST RESORT FOR VETTEL. IT IS NOW PROBABLY THE FASTEST-GROWING TEAM ON THE GRID, WITH ANNOUNCEMENTS OF NEW SIGNINGS IN THE MANAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL STRUCTURE COMING ONE AFTER ANOTHER**

to the car, but you also want to perform to the highest level. So you have to do some trade-offs.”

Vettel didn't score in the first four races for Aston Martin. That wasn't really his fault – in Bahrain qualifying he was compromised by one of Nikita Mazepin's early F1 spins, while at Imola he started from the pitlane when his brakes overheated. But it's not that Vettel himself was flying. It took him some time to get up to speed – but Szafnauer says it was never in doubt that he'd eventually crack it.

“At the beginning, where it wasn't going so well, and he had to get more acclimatised with the car and understand it better, he just worked harder and harder. He wasn't discouraged. He just said, ‘I have to do better’.

“He is highly motivated; he pushes the team and pushes himself. When he underachieves, like in qualifying [in Austria], where he had one of his lap times deleted, you know, he's hard on himself. He expects more. He says, ‘I'm really sorry, I expect more of myself’. Which is a good quality to have.

“Of course we wanted to help him. But yeah, he's a great driver, and we knew that at 34 years old he didn't forget how to drive a Formula 1 car fast. He's proven that. And of course, we wanted to help him. But we wanted to help him because it helps us. That's a selfish thing.”

## THE RIGHT ATMOSPHERE

Sebastian opened his Aston Martin account with fifth in Monaco, not least because of some superb strategy. And there was a dash of luck to his podium next time out in Azerbaijan – but Vettel himself was flawless on Sunday in Baku.

It would be an exaggeration to say he's back to

his best now. But his body language hints he's in a much happier place. He starts a press conference with a silly joke about a matchstick meeting a hedgehog on a mountain; he puts a souvenir Azerbaijani hat atop a Pirelli cap on the podium, and gives practical advice on Dutch TV to those

in the country who didn't enlist in the Max Verstappen fan army and head to Austria: “If you want to do a robbery, now is the time!”.

It is a striking contrast to the guy who is told “we cannot be too funny” by a Ferrari PR in Episode 4 of *Drive to Survive* Season 3 on Netflix. ►



"I think for him it's kind of a relief, because the whole situation at Aston Martin is much more relaxed than it used to be at Ferrari," says Schmidt. "Obviously there are too many restrictions also at Ferrari on what you can say, what you can do, and some of them were really stupid, you know. He was always fed up with it."

"This is a smaller team and at the moment there's much more freedom for him. And he feels that he can give the team something to help them to grow into a top team. He feels he has a role now, a role which has been lost at Ferrari."

When Sebastian Vettel is happy there is no better person to have around in the F1 paddock. And as Szafnauer points out, the bond between driver and team is already strong, on and off the track. After the Baku podium, the German went back to the factory to finally meet people he couldn't meet during the winter.

"We had an event out on the front lawn, because it was summer," says Otmar. "And all the people were outside, still wearing masks, but at least you were outside. And they all came up,

took pictures with Sebastian, with the trophy. He said a few words to everybody, he introduced himself. He said: 'Hi, my name is Sebastian'. And it was really, really nice."

"I think he's got some of the qualities that Michael [Schumacher] had in building a good team around him. I see Sebastian doing the same. The guys absolutely love him. And they want to support him to the nth degree."

"He's got that ability to get everybody on side. And I think that comes from how you treat everybody and your honesty, and all that. The engineers and the mechanics love when he comes in and genuinely wants to help them tear down the car after a race. Sometimes he brings them a case of beer after a good race."

"It goes a long way with people. And he does it from the heart. Once you know it's genuine, it's even more meaningful."

## THE IMPACT OF A WORLD CHAMPION

In his three years with Mercedes, Vettel's hero and compatriot Michael Schumacher didn't much improve his career statistics. One podium and a single pole wasn't quite what his fans were expecting from his F1 comeback. But ask Mercedes engineers and they'll insist the German played a huge role in the team's development.

Vettel can do the same at Aston, and is still



**Szafnauer (right) feels Vettel has already developed a strong bond with the team**

young enough to be able to benefit from his own efforts. His influence is already felt – for example, according to Szafnauer, in the team's debriefs.

"He's much more precise and more detailed around the lap," says Szafnauer of the differences between Seb and drivers the team used to work with in the past, "as to how he describes and what he describes, you know, the three segments of the corner, the entry into the corner, the middle phase and the exit. He describes all that to a very high level of detail, more than the other drivers."

"It's looking for the nth degree of detail to ensure we get all of it right. All those little things add up to something bigger. That's the difference."

"And Lance [Stroll] is learning from that. ►

**THIS IS A SMALLER  
TEAM AND AT THE MOMENT  
THERE'S MUCH MORE  
FREEDOM FOR HIM. HE  
FEELS HE HAS A ROLE**

**MICHAEL SCHMIDT**



PICTURES: GLENN DUNBAR





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**In Hungary Vettel's rainbow T-shirt showed a willingness to address matters outside of F1**

Lance appreciates it, he learns from it too, and Lance's debriefs are getting better as well."

But that is exactly the way it should be. After all, Vettel is the first world champion racing for the Silverstone team since Damon Hill parked his car in a Jordan garage at Suzuka after 21 laps of the 1999 Japanese Grand Prix.

"We're very happy with him," says Otmar of Vettel. "He fits in very well with the team. You know, we've got to do a little bit better job on the car. But he's gotten used to the car now. And you can see, his qualifying performance has increased, his race pace has increased. He had absolute great races in both Baku and Monaco [and Hungary]. So we're happy.

"He understands the car now. He's helped develop it to this point. He's changed some things for drivability on the engine and some other things to make it easier for him to drive to his style. And it shows on track.

"Like I said, he's just much more experienced in how to win, and how to go about winning. He doesn't have to learn it. He's learned it already. So now he can impart that knowledge on the team and on Lance and on all of us, which is different than trying to learn it yourself."

## THE SAME, BUT DIFFERENT

So much has happened in the nearly 15 years since Szafernauer and Vettel met close to the



PICTURES: ZAK MAUGER; GLENN DUNBAR; MARK SUTTON

**Vettel's first podium with Aston Martin came in Baku (above) but a second, at the Hungarian GP, was ruled out after the car was disqualified**



Nürburgring. Seb claimed many of Formula 1's records, and fulfilled his childhood dream of racing for Ferrari.

He is married, a father of three. And his life is not anymore just about racing. In his interviews, Vettel increasingly touches on topics well beyond the world of Formula 1.

It's almost as if there's a double meaning to his new green overalls. These days, Vettel tries to get to European grands prix by train, avoids flying as much as he can, and rides a bicycle from the hotel to the track where possible.

Vettel's Swiss home is equipped with solar panels and he always carries a backpack when he goes supermarket shopping. And he's calling on F1 to do its part in helping the world reach a sustainable future, for example, by aiding the development of synthetic fuels.

"I think that's admirable," says Szafernauer. "He's a racing car driver in Formula 1. But you know, there's 19 other ones too that don't do what he does. At home, he doesn't have plastic bottles anymore. He drives an electric car. He did some bee awareness [campaign in Austria],


and at Silverstone he volunteered to help with litter collection after the race.

"You know, he means it. And there's nothing wrong with being a Formula 1 driver, but at the same time being conscious of the environment and trying to help it get better for the future.

"That comes with age, and it comes with the world we live in. Ten years ago, we weren't really worried about it that much, about plastics and some other things. But now that it's been brought to his attention, he wants to make a difference. And he's working the best he can at it."

Vettel is no longer that 20-year-old boy Szafernauer met, but instead one of the most successful drivers in F1 history. But did this success really change him?

"Not as a person," Szafernauer says. "I'm sure it changed him as a racing driver. You know, he won in Toro Rosso, and then went to Red Bull and won a lot of championships. I'm sure it changed, you know, the way he works, [his understanding of] what you have to do to win, and he learned all that.

"But as a person, he's still the same guy." 



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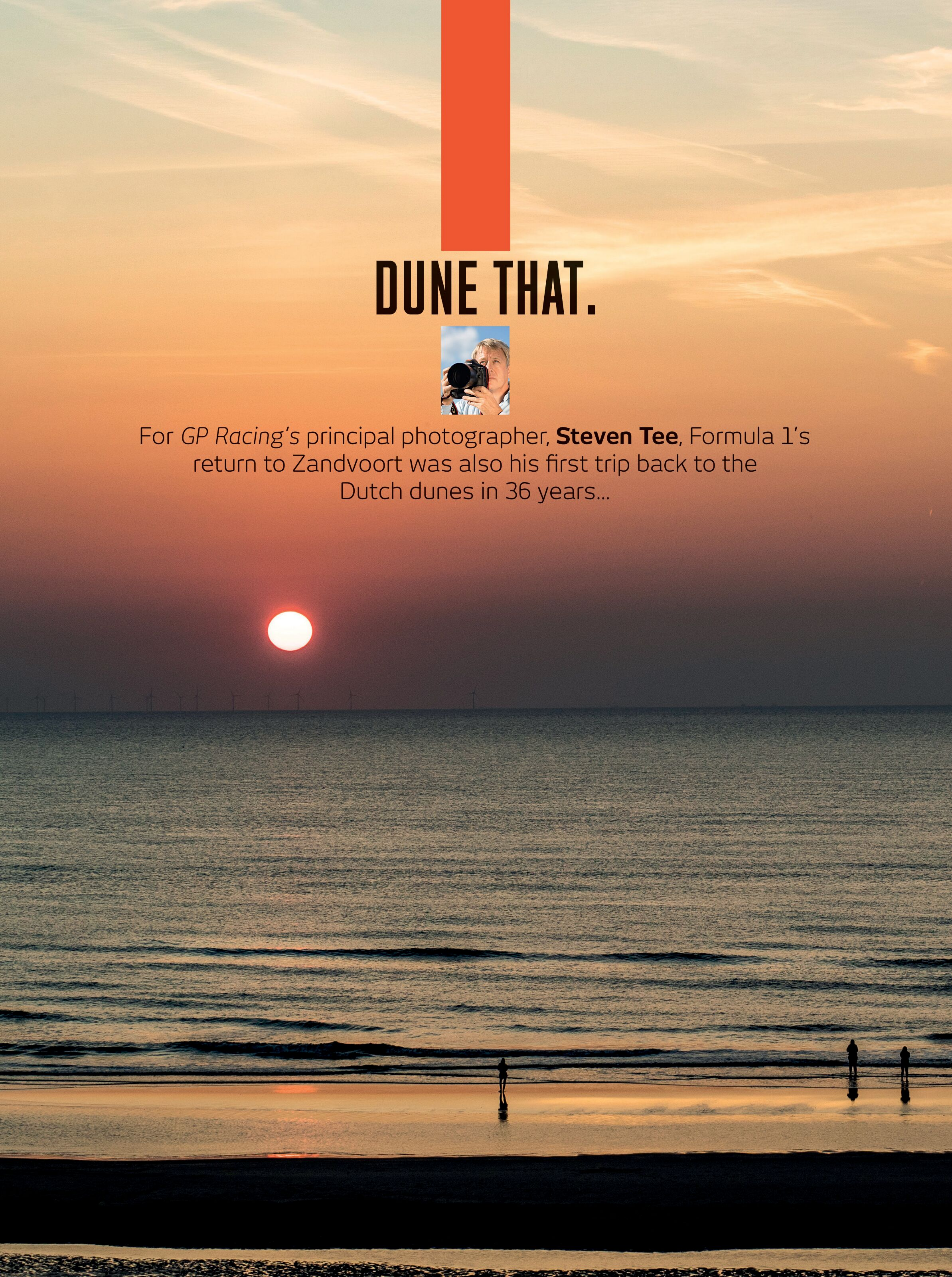




# DUNE THAT.



For *GP Racing's* principal photographer, **Steven Tee**, Formula 1's return to Zandvoort was also his first trip back to the Dutch dunes in 36 years...





## 1985 WAS MY FIRST

full season of Formula 1 and I hadn't been back to Zandvoort, or Holland, since – until the grand prix came back this year. The whole area, everything, was very much as I remember: sand dunes, the beach. Pickled herrings – you can buy pickled herrings and chips and mayo in the little shelters they've got lined up like little caravans all the way along the seafront. That was exactly the same as I remember from 1985, though it feels a little bit more upmarket now. They've got beach clubs, and the whole place has quite a nice vibe to it.

Holland is really cool. We stayed in Haarlem, a picturesque city to the east of the circuit, with a canal and a windmill and all the typical things you associate with the Netherlands. We used a back road to drive to the track, and along that route you go through these massive mature forests with trees coming over the road, huge houses dotted around. It has a really strong first-world feeling about it – everybody cycling. There were horror stories about how the traffic was going to be, but they did a brilliant job managing it. Unless you had a team or media pass you couldn't get within 10 miles of the circuit, so everybody just cycled in and cycled out.

The general vibe of the place was similar to what I remember from 1985. The race back then was only about a week earlier, 25 August, so good weather, a lot of people in

town enjoying the beach. I recall a little cobbled street in the middle of Zandvoort with restaurants down each side. The first time I ever ate Indonesian food was there. Indonesian cuisine is quite big in Holland, because of its colonial past, and they do this delicious thing called a rijsttafel (which translates as 'rice table'). They just bring you a load of different Indonesian dishes to share, like a sort of Indonesian tapas. I said to the boys one of things I strongly remember about being here 30 years ago was having mega Indonesian food, so the first night we arrived in Haarlem we went for a rijsttafel – and it was just as amazing as I remember.

You can see a lot of the track is the same but different, if that makes sense. Turn 3 (Hugenholtzbocht) is still in exactly the same location, it's just obviously massively banked now. And there are many more sponsorships signs dotted around the place compared to 1985, which takes away from some of the pretty views. The circuit layout is similar to that of old, but the way they've banked it makes it a much more interesting place to watch F1 cars at work. It has a similar sort of vibe to Suzuka: narrow, lots of gravel traps everywhere. A really ballsy track – and ballsy of the FIA, in a way, to sanction it as a modern grand prix circuit. I asked two or three of the drivers over the weekend, Danny Ricc, Lando Norris, Sergio Pérez, and they all thought it was bloody amazing to drive. They absolutely loved it, because it's so challenging and doesn't have runoffs the size of a Sainsbury's car park... ▶

**There aren't many better places to have a holiday home if you just happen to be an F1 fan**







The 'Orange Army' came out in force to welcome their hero to his home race



Max waves to his adoring fans,  
He's just won the race and  
retaken the championship lead...







On the opening lap Verstappen leads the field towards the now banked Turn 3 (Hugenholtzbocht)



Even Daniel Ricciardo got into the Zandvoort vibe, modelling one of the free orange lion capes



Traffic (below) wasn't a problem while the food caravans (bottom) are still part of the experience



The race was pretty straightforward in the end, and I'm amazed there were no Safety Cars after all the red flags we saw in practice and qualifying. The only negative I could really say about the whole weekend was that the track just isn't synonymous with overtaking. They weren't going to let the drivers use DRS through the final banked corner, and the fact Pérez flat-spotted his tyres trying to overtake Nikita Mazepin's Haas made you realise just how edgy it was trying to pass anyone into Tarzan. Even if Lewis Hamilton had been quick enough to catch Max Verstappen, it was always going to be very difficult for him to get past. It was similar in '85. Alain Prost caught Niki Lauda, but just couldn't find a way by.

It's an incredibly undulating circuit, and it felt a bit like being at a go-kart track because the cars came at you so thick and fast. You also didn't have to walk very far to get to different parts of the circuit; it was always coming back on itself. Back in 1985, you used to be able to cross the track during the session – a marshal would make sure no cars were coming out of Tarzan and

then wave you across at Turn 3. They don't allow that anymore, and probably quite right too!

In the middle of the whole thing, you've got the pits and paddock, which are tiny and have hardly changed since I first visited. You've all seen those pictures from the 1970s, where cars would sit in the pitlane all day and only get pushed back into small garages at night. It still had that sort of vibe to it, though obviously they must have played with the space a bit to accommodate modern operations. The current motorhomes were too big to sit behind the pits, so there was a separate area for those, which was quite interesting in itself because at what we called the 'horseshoe turn' (Hans Ernst Bocht, where Carlos Sainz crashed in FP3) there was a massive grandstand, and the people on the back of that grandstand could actually see into the motorhomes. Every time a driver emerged into view huge cheers would erupt – and when Max appeared, well, then the noise went off the scale.

The proximity of the grandstands to the circuit made the hubbub all-enveloping. The Dutch fans ►





Max's win was straightforward and the conquering hero will never forget his victory lap...

are very friendly and created a fantastic atmosphere. The good thing about the Dutch is they've always loved motor racing. They are fans of F1 itself – a bit like in the UK, there's a lot of love for cars in general – but the level of love for Max was extraordinary. I worked for Benetton in the 1990s, when his father Jos raced. He had a strong following – but nothing on this level.

Obviously, we had 140,000 Brits at Silverstone for the British GP, and most of them were supporting Lewis, but not everyone dresses in support of him. This was more like a partisan football crowd. You could probably count on one hand the number of people you saw arriving in Red Bull team gear. Everyone was wearing orange. They were giving away these orange capes with a lion on them – Danny Ricci wore one on the grid – the support for Max was simply off the charts. But he doesn't even have to work the crowd. He's very demure about the whole thing and works hard to keep himself to himself. He had four bodyguards with him all weekend, and hardly left the circuit. In fact, I was waiting for the bus to go back to the media

car park on Sunday evening and there was suddenly a massive great kerfuffle – two motorbikes and some outriders with Max on the back of a scooter disappeared off at speed. I guess he couldn't really make time for the fans this weekend – there were simply too many of them for him to handle.

Daniel Ricciardo described it as like being at a festival, and I liked Christian Horner's line about the event feeling like being at a nightclub for four days straight. He was absolutely right, because they had these DJ stations around the track, pumping out that sort of Dutch techno/trance-type music. In Mexico they have a DJ set just after the race finishes, but this felt much more natural – and in Holland you also have a fanbase that knows what it's listening to.

The promoter did a great job of looking after the fans. On Friday morning we didn't have much running in FP1 because it took an inordinate amount of time to clear Sebastian Vettel's car away – basically a marshal mistakenly thought the Aston was still 'live' electrically speaking, when it plainly ►



Lauda had to work harder for his win back in 1985. Here he passes the Brabham of Marc Surer



Cycling was the main mode of transport for the fans. A sign of things to come for F1 perhaps?





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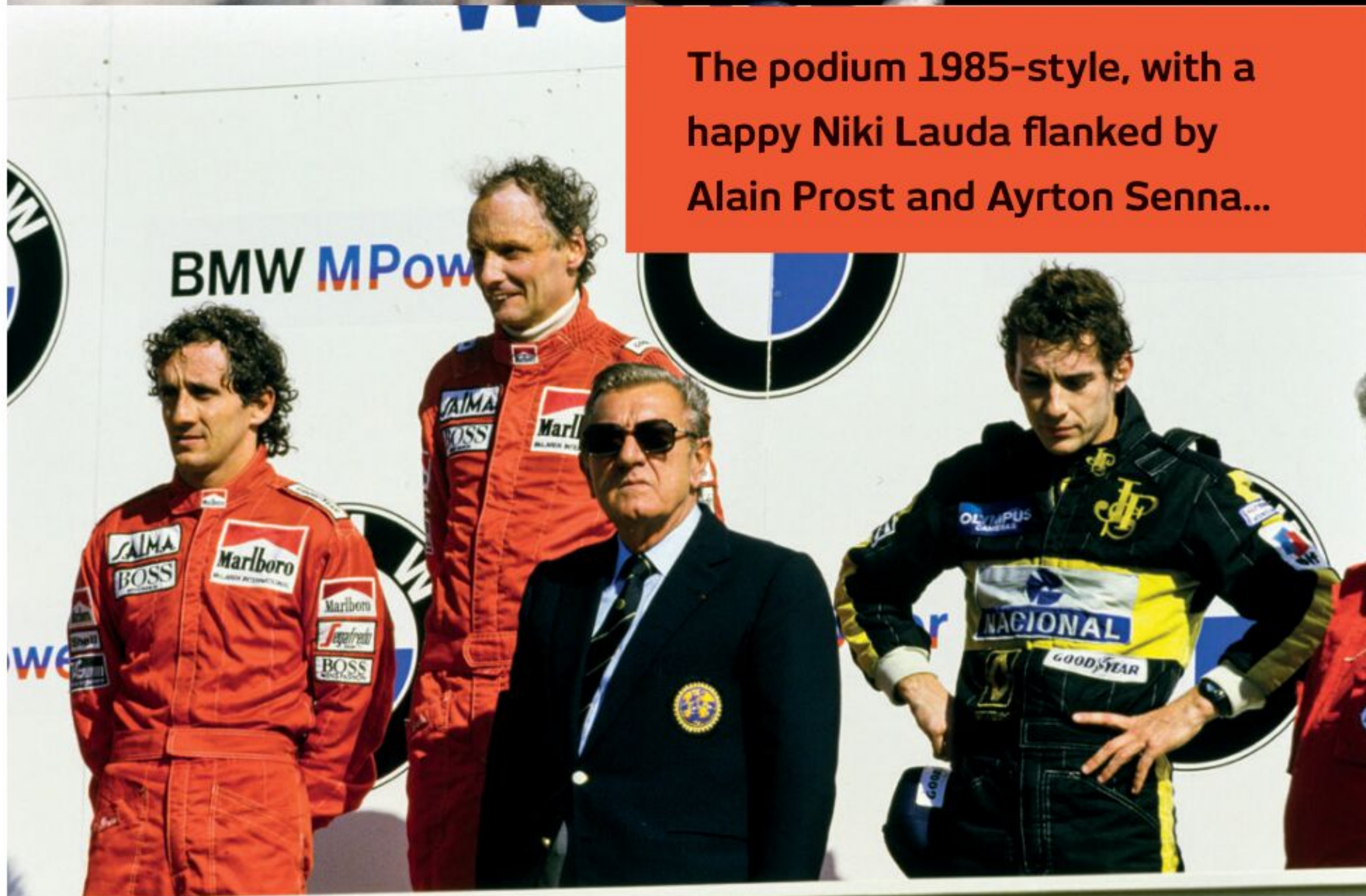
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The Red Bull mechanics celebrate Verstappen's Dutch GP victory with not a Mercedes in sight



The podium 1985-style, with a happy Niki Lauda flanked by Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna...




...and the 2021 version, starring the mask-wearing Verstappen, Hamilton and Bottas

wasn't. I think we lost about 35 minutes, there was nothing going on, and there was a massive crowd there – even on the Friday, the grandstands looked rammed – but as soon as there was a lull in track action, a red flag or whatever, a DJ would get the crowd going.

I can't remember a better atmosphere at a grand prix, anywhere. It definitely felt like being at a festival – you had people camping and generally really enjoying themselves all the way through the site. I'm sure for anyone watching it was a great advert for Formula 1, and the Liberty Media guys must have been delighted with how it all turned out. The Dutch royal family was there, the owners of Heineken (which sponsored the race) were there too, it was a massive occasion. The national anthem played twice in one day thanks to Max's win – I think it was even performed by a live band – and nobody I talked to after the race was anything other than pleased the right man won, and that the fans got what they came for.

It was an incredible event, one

that's going to set targets for other places in terms of how you go about things and putting on a proper show. We went through a period in the Bernie Ecclestone era when he clearly wasn't interested in the fans at all, and I think his TV guys eventually persuaded him they are important, because if you've got full grandstands you're more likely to watch the race as a TV audience because the race suddenly feels like something worth watching if people are prepared to turn up for it. The two things are linked, so that spectacle has got to be amazing. The Miami Grand Prix guys – Tom Garfinkel and Richard Cregan – were there having a look, and they must have come back thinking 'God, how are we going to replicate that?!'.

The true measure of a race is its popularity with the fanbase, the people who are prepared to stump up the money, many months in advance, to actually go and see the thing up close, and I'm sure this one will run and run, almost regardless of what Max does. But I don't think they've got to worry for the next five to 10 years. He's not going anywhere. 



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# MARCIN BUDKOWSKI

Alpine's executive director on how the much-changed team has finally returned to winning ways – and why Fernando Alonso is such a valuable asset in its efforts to improve even further

**It's been a long road back for 'Team Enstone' because there was something of a brain drain under the previous ownership. What have been the main challenges, in bringing the facilities back to where they ought to be, and in terms of learning how to win again, as a team?**

Like you said, when Renault purchased the team again, in December 2015, there had been a big brain drain – a lot of people had left. Often it's the best people who get an offer first from the other teams and, if their salaries aren't being paid, that's a breach of contract and they can leave on a Friday and start at another team on Monday. That's how bad it was. People would just disappear almost overnight in the latter part of the Lotus era. There was no paper in the printers, suppliers weren't being paid and weren't delivering parts.

People maybe don't realise how dire the situation of the team was. And that's just the surface. The technical infrastructure – the tools and methodologies, the processes, the software tools, the windtunnel, everything was left behind. We'd purchased a gearbox dyno, paid a significant proportion of it but didn't pay the last instalment, and we had to buy one again a few years later. This is the kind of stuff I discovered when I joined.

The initial gains are the easiest ones: you put in a bit of order, you inject money where you need to, pay your suppliers, and suddenly the oxygen is flowing. But then you still have to do the groundwork, the stuff that wasn't done and was sorely missing – updating the windtunnel and recruiting. Often we had to wait 18 months to see new recruits because of the contract situation, gardening leave and so on, and then that person would need a few months to settle in and start to have an impact. Three years go past before you start to see the benefits of the investments.

Could it have been quicker? Yeah, probably, as you never do everything right. And also we weren't financed to a level that would have

enabled us to take all the shortcuts we could have. Equally, there's no point trying to do the shiny bits before you address the foundations, and I think we've done most of that now. I'm not saying Hungary was the result of that, because it was an opportunistic victory – however, the team was there to grab it, and did it in style. I think next year is the opportunity to judge whether all the work that's been put into rebuilding this organisation is starting to yield progress.

**In your management restructure at the beginning of the season, there was a separation of factory and trackside operations with Davide Brivio coming in as sporting director. How has that panned out in practice?**

I think it's fair to say it surprised quite a few people at the beginning of the year, and to be honest it did create a little bit of confusion because we had to understand who had responsibility for what. It's a different level and a different reach, but Alpine is a similar model to Ferrari – a small French Ferrari, if you like – a car brand built around a Formula 1 team. And that meant Laurent [Rossi] came in as the CEO of Alpine, and is in charge of building the brand and the car manufacturer, but the brand is built around the F1 team and therefore Laurent's responsibility very much incorporates motorsports. His background is much more commercial than mine, my background is very much F1, so we're very complementary.

I run the team on a day-to-day basis, and

**“IT IS CLEAR WE HAVE THE DRIVERS TO DELIVER IF THEY ARE GIVEN A GOOD PACKAGE”**

obviously we've had the addition of Davide at the beginning of the year. There's a lot of complexity compared with MotoGP so it's been a steep learning curve for Davide. Everybody on the team has been helping him to get up to speed. We were conscious it would take him some time to be able to fill this role completely, which means that in the meantime, on top of the responsibilities I have at the factory, I'm doing the races as well.

**How important was that victory in Hungary in terms of building momentum and confidence, with all the regulation changes coming next year?**

There was some luck involved, obviously, but that race wasn't won on lap one or lap two. There was a lot of pressure from Seb [Vettel], a lot that was needed in the strategy and the pitstops, in Fernando's defence of his position. Everything was played right.

Obviously we need to generate a quicker package – a quicker car, a better engine. It is clear we have the drivers to deliver if they are given a good package. In parallel to building the organisation and gearing up to be able to deliver a better car, you have to make sure everything else is working perfectly. Esteban [Ocon], for example, we changed his race engineering team over the winter and it did a world of good to his confidence in the car and the team.

**You mentioned Esteban and the confidence boost he required, and obviously that's come to fruition. How valuable is Fernando Alonso as an asset both now and going forwards as you tackle the uncharted waters of 2022 and beyond?**

He's shown he's lost nothing of his speed and racecraft. It took a few races for him to get back into the groove, but it's clear he's lost nothing – not just the driving skills, the hunger and determination too. And that shows every day at the factory. The best way to remotivate staff, if they need it, is to bring Fernando in for a quick factory tour because he's always pushing.



# SCHUMACHER

100% Match 2021

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Michael Schumacher is the latest global sporting superstar to get the 'Netflix treatment', with a special documentary film airing on the US streaming giant's platform this month. **Damien Smith** has the inside track on how the filmmakers gained access to tell the human story behind one of Formula 1's most publicity-shy champions

PICTURES: SCHUMACHER PRIVATE COLLECTION, GETTY IMAGES, IMAGO, KRÄLING MOTORSPORT BILD, MOTORSPORT IMAGES



**"How nice he is."** That was how Vanessa Nöcker, co-producer and co-director of the new documentary on Michael Schumacher, answered our question on what surprised her the most about her subject during filming. If that reads like damning with faint praise, think again about the figure we are talking about. For 20 years Schumacher was both parts an arrogant pantomime villain to the English-speaking world and a Zeus-like God who could do no wrong in his own country. But to those who worked with him at Benetton, then Ferrari and on his Formula 1 return with Mercedes, Schumacher was indeed simply 'nice'.

He was lovely, in fact; those who worked with him and for him generally adored him. For a man who spent so long in the unrelenting glare of the media spotlight, and in fairness didn't always do himself any favours during the most controversial episodes that grazed his reputation through his long and ultra-successful career, being considered 'nice' and so incredibly grounded should be considered a remarkable achievement.

'Schumacher' is available now on Netflix and is the latest in a recent line of big F1 feature-length documentary releases, following in the wake of studies on Max Mosley, Sir Frank Williams, Bruce McLaren, Ferrari in the 1950s and most notably Ayrton Senna, the one that really kicked off what is fast becoming its own movie genre.

The Williams documentary (still available on the BBC's iPlayer) is the most striking, intimate and at times shocking so far because Sir Frank isn't exactly portrayed in a manner that always garners sympathy, thanks to the startling honesty of his own family.

Likewise, 'Schumacher' promises a nuanced sketch of Michael that doesn't skim away from the hard subjects – the notorious moments of his career such as Adelaide 1994 and Jerez 1997, then most notably the devastating skiing accident in December 2013 that so profoundly changed his life – while also offering insight, from those who know and love him the most, into the simple man behind the sporting colossus.

While Michael himself can only speak to us through archive footage, the film features interviews with his fiercely private and protective wife Corinna, her children Gina and Haas F1 ace Mick, Michael's brother and ex-rival Ralf, plus big-hitters including Jean Todt, Bernie Ecclestone, Sebastian Vettel, Mika Häkkinen, Damon Hill, Flavio Briatore, David Coulthard, Luca di Montezemolo, Piero Ferrari, Michael's manager Sabine Kehm and more. Quite a cast.

But it's the interviews with Schumacher's family, including his father, that really makes this release a landmark. Officially endorsed projects aren't always the best if they only show a sanitised, squeaky-clean view of a controversial subject, but this is Schumacher – a monumental figure in our world whose story deserves a closer look beyond the history we all know so well. As he can't speak for himself, to hear it from those closest to him who are still suffering the pain of what his life has now become is little short of a privilege.

*GP Racing* spoke to Vanessa Nöcker in the run-up to the movie's release and before we'd had a chance to see it. She had been inundated with requests to speak about the film she co-produced with Benjamin Seikel, and co-directed with Michael Wech and Hanns-Bruno Kammertöns, an experienced journalist who knew, befriended and interviewed Michael during his driving career. All of them had worked together before, ▶







on a documentary about a far more gregarious character, German tennis great Boris Becker.

“We had the idea to make a film for Michael’s 50th birthday, which was January 2019 – a long time ago!” explains Nöcker of the film’s origins. “Hanns-Bruno knows Sabine Kehm and Michael Schumacher also. He did some interviews with him during his career. So he called Sabine and from that point on we started talking. But these talks weren’t only about the film and the concept we had. They were trying to find out more about our attitude, to find out who we are and why we wanted to do this. There were a lot of meetings.”

Kehm was all too used to pitches from journalists, filmmakers and producers wanting to get close to Michael – all through his driving career, not just since the accident. But now Corinna and the Schumacher family recognised the timing for such a project felt right, not so much because of a birthday or an anniversary, more because a man of Schumacher’s global stature deserved such a film. In the press release, Kehm says: “It is his family’s gift to their beloved husband and father.”

The filmmakers’ strong credentials and Kammertöns’ personal contact helped, but it’s likely their approach was

the clincher in being given the green light. “The documentary was a big challenge and needed a lot of time and sensitivity, considering the pressure that was put on the production from the outside,” says Seikel. “Thanks to a great team and a really great collaboration with the family, we didn’t let ourselves get rattled. We’re excited about its global release on Netflix. The film was always intended to be an international documentary and we’re confident it will be embraced as such.”

Nöcker emphasises the producer/director team was always interested in telling a human story beyond a straight sports doc – and notably, the focus wouldn’t be on the accident and its awful consequences. “Michael seems to be very open, has this open face – but the human part of his story hasn’t been told really,” she says. “Germans and people around the world love him for his

smile and his open heart when he gets up on the podium. That’s what I’ve seen all my life because I have a father and two brothers, and we watched him winning and losing, winning and losing.

“So here our main goal was to tell his career story through his character, it wasn’t to make headlines about his accident. But we very openly said from the beginning the film had to address the accident too. Somehow. Because we can’t ignore it. Everyone would get very mad if we did. So we had to find a way to tell that and it was a process – a long process. Which is why we are getting this out now. It doesn’t have anything to do with his birthday anymore.”

The timing of the release, just after the 30th anniversary of Schumacher’s F1 debut for Jordan at Spa, is a happy coincidence. “The film was ready in October last year,” says Nöcker. “It was planned and produced for cinema and we were a little sad we couldn’t show it in cinemas, but it is still not possible. Now we are really happy to go with Netflix because many people will see it all over the world. Fans as well as families. So in the end Netflix is the best scenario that could happen to us and I only wish that many people will watch the film wearing

earphones because of the awesome sound.”

As the stream of A-list movie stars making films and TV for Netflix attests, the service does represent a zeitgeist choice for such a release. The ‘*Drive to Survive*’ effect on F1 is the prime example of mass audience power – 209 million paid memberships in more than 190 countries – so ‘*Schumacher*’ was never likely to be a niche production for a specialist audience. But that shouldn’t devalue its worth to *GP Racing* readers.

The story arc centres on Schumacher’s “personal fight”, as Nöcker describes it: the rise from his humble roots in rural Kerpen, the two championships in 1994-95, the moments of controversy, his switch to Ferrari, how he kept falling short of that vital first championship in red, until the moment of release in 2000 when the run of domination began that took his tally ▶

**“OUR MAIN GOAL WAS TO TELL HIS CAREER STORY THROUGH HIS CHARACTER, IT WASN’T TO MAKE HEADLINES ABOUT HIS ACCIDENT”**

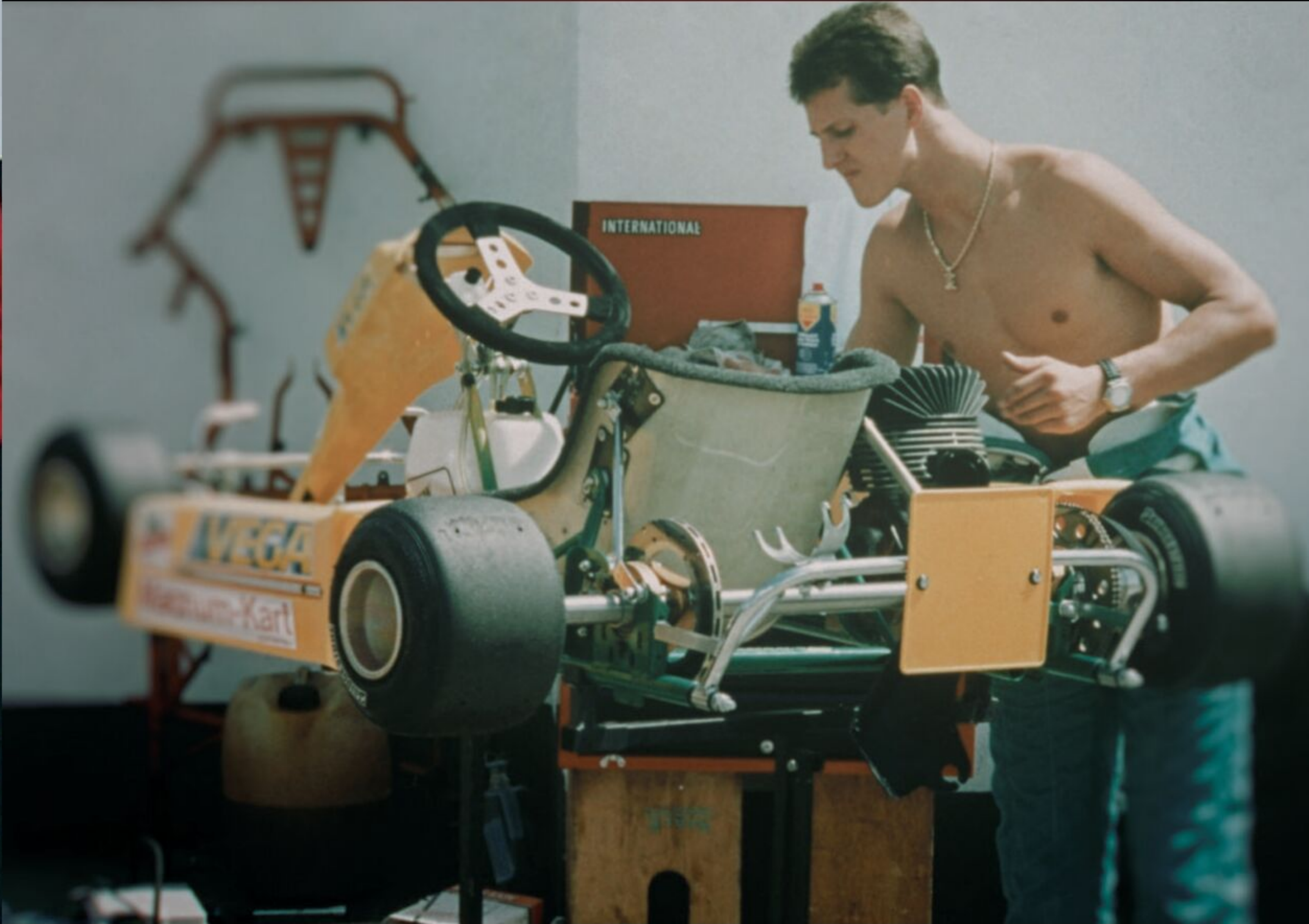
**VANESSA NÖCKER**







The documentary covers Michael's whole career, including his karting days (below) and his successful time at Ferrari (left and bottom), and wouldn't have been possible without Michael's wife, Corinna (middle) and the rest of the family





Michael in happier times with Gina and Mick (right) and wife Corinna (bottom). Corinna's trust in the filmmakers made the documentary possible

to 91 grand prix victories and seven world titles. That's the sports film bit. Central to the narrative is how grounded Schumacher remained amid the whirlwind that was his racing life – and how those who worked with him and knew the man behind the media caricature were dedicated to the cause because of the way he was with them.

“Ross Brawn says in the film Michael knew everyone, the names of the team members' wives, he played soccer with them,” says Nöcker. “He was one of them. He also was a mechanic in his heart, building karts with his dad and his brother. He knew how to use a screwdriver and he was trying to develop the car further and further. That is what his team loved. As Eddie Irvine said, he made the car better, that's what he could do. He was apparently able to perform small miracles. That's really cool.”

But there's another star of the story who, if anything, shares equal billing. “Corinna is a fighting lioness, a protector – and very warm,” says Nöcker. “I was impressed by her. She is very straight, she knew what she wanted. She is really a fighter. We all really respected her because she didn't make any boundaries for us that would have made it impossible to make the film. She was very open. She said ‘I don't want a legend story, I want the real story so tell it the way you like – and I hope I like it in the end’. That was her attitude.

“She knew we wouldn't want to hurt her and she had the security that if she said something she didn't mean or broke down in tears we would cut that out. But we had all the freedom in every other way. And in some way the film also turned out to be a bit of a love story too.”


For all of Corinna Schumacher's trust, this



**THERE IS ANOTHER STAR OF THE STORY WHO, IF ANYTHING, SHARES EQUAL BILLING. CORINNA. “SHE IS A FIGHTING LIONESS, A PROTECTOR – AND VERY WARM, SHE DIDN'T MAKE ANY BOUNDARIES FOR US TO MAKE THE FILM”**



was never going to be an easy project to bring to fruition in such desperately sad circumstances. So how did the family respond when they saw it for the first time? “They were moved,” says Nöcker. “Imagine that somebody made a 112-minute portrait about someone you love. What would that do to you? Corinna was happy. She didn't have any problems, even with the parts that do not show Michael's best side. Even those things, she said ‘that's real, that's the way he is’.

“We tried our best and I think you can really see him,” Nöcker concludes. “For me, that's what makes the film so special.” 



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Brown with Alejandro Agag (right), the founder of Formula E and Extreme E, at the ultra-modern MTC, surrounded by cars from McLaren's storied past. As part of McLaren's racing expansion, Brown has already committed to Extreme E for 2022 and has an option for Formula E for the 2022-2023 season



# BACK TO THE

# FUTURE



In the 1960s and '70s, **McLaren** juggled works entries in Formula 1, sportscars and the Indy 500 while building cars for F3 and F2. Now it's returning to its roots, expanding into IndyCars and Extreme E while continuing its F1 renaissance. There's talk of Formula E and WEC entries too. But is this all too much, too soon?

WORDS STUART CODLING

PICTURES

 **motorsport**  
IMAGES

AND MCLAREN



**Y**OU'D BE FORGIVEN for wondering why a grandee team which hadn't won a grand prix for almost a decade until Daniel Ricciardo's triumph at Monza, is spreading its wings beyond Formula 1. Especially when that team, despite that welcome 1-2 in Italy, is part

of a financially troubled group which has had to make difficult cutbacks – to the extent it now rents the home it spent £300million building.

But with McLaren's growing involvement in IndyCar, eSports and Extreme E, alongside putative dalliances in Formula E and the World Endurance Championship, there is at least a historical precedent: this is a company rooted in getting stuck in to different racing formulae, even if it hasn't done that for many years.

Back when the factory, such as it was, had a dirt floor and you could count the number of employees on one hand, Bruce McLaren energetically contested the Tasman series and various sportscar events before committing the company to Formula 1. And even then his tiny group continued to build and sell single-seater and sportscar chassis to customers, while eventually running concurrent campaigns in F1 and the lucrative Can-Am sportscar

championship, alongside Indy 500 entries.

Putting yourself and your staff through such an exhausting globe-hopping schedule was eye-watering even then and would not be countenanced in our more HR-enlightened age. F1's growth and evolution also militated against running multiple campaigns as its calendar expanded and its technical demands multiplied.

Under the leadership of Ron Dennis, McLaren focused on F1 and prospered on track through the 1980s, later growing successful parallel businesses in electronics and technology, hospitality and road-car manufacture. But a competitive slump during the past decade proved costly. At the time of Dennis's ousting in a boardroom putsch in 2016, McLaren had become a profitable technology group with a loss-making racing company attached.

The group's new leadership appears to be unpicking Dennis's grand vision of McLaren as a patriotic technology leader and returning to its origins as a racing organisation and car builder (Bruce McLaren built a roadgoing prototype shortly before his death, which caused the plans to be shelved). Asked by *GP Racing* whether McLaren has essentially pivoted away from being a tech company, CEO Zak Brown is unequivocal.

"Exactly right," he says. "McLaren is in the

business of racing and there's two ways to deliver value to our shareholders. One is obviously to be a profitable business. But the bigger win is building the franchise value, the value of the entire operation. But everything also ties back in to supporting and growing our F1 team. So, while the different racing activities – Extreme E, eSports and IndyCar – all stand on their own two feet, they also help build the F1 brand.

In F1, McLaren has been noticeably successful in assembling a portfolio of sponsors to replace the previous model of relying on a big-ticket title partner. Expanding into other series opens the possibility of accessing new markets, whether that's in spaces where Formula 1 doesn't have as big a footprint as elsewhere, or demographics F1 hasn't yet adequately addressed – but which are of vital interest to potential partners.

Extreme E, in which electric-powered SUVs race off-road, is viewed with scepticism in some quarters – the rationale to "highlight remote environments under threat from climate change issues" by racing across them seems pretty thin – but it packs a powerful diversity message, mandating each car has a male and female driver. Likewise, eSports is aspirational, diverse and accessible, since the financial barriers to entry are far lower than for conventional motorsport.

"For the majority of our partners, North America is a very important marketplace," says Brown. "So by having an IndyCar programme, we've got a broader, deeper offering for our commercial partners who say North America is really important. F1 is growing there but having an IndyCar team turbocharges that, and I know we've had some partners join us because we had a bigger North American presence than F1 alone.

"Arrow Electronics, who are our title sponsor in IndyCar, have joined our F1 team, we've had BAT who are a principal partner in F1 join our IndyCar team, along with Tezos, Darktrace, etc. So, while IndyCar is a profitable business, it's great for our brand and we're leading the championship, it's also helped bring more partners into F1.

"It's the same concept with Extreme E – sustainability, we were the first team to be carbon neutral in 2011. The majority of the other teams now are scrambling to make that same claim. McLaren has been true to sustainability for a decade now and Extreme E is a great way for McLaren Racing to highlight our sustainability credentials, and the same thing with gender and diversity, which again is a very important topic for our partners.

**Appointing Andreas Seidl (left) as team principal just for F1 has been a success and Brown will not have people working across racing disciplines**







“And then the same concept with eSports – we were the first F1 team to move into eSports in a meaningful way. And that’s for the younger generation, grassroots motor racing if you like, and diversity – because you’ve got men and women from all over the world who want to have a steering wheel in their hands. It gives us that younger audience which F1 is driving towards but isn’t where it needs to be yet.”

Brown says McLaren Racing is on course to turn a profit within the next few years, provided revenues grow and Formula 1’s budget cap continues its glide path from the present \$145m per year to \$135m in 2023. And it *needs* to turn a profit, since the McLaren Group has in effect been forced to sell off the family silver in order to keep afloat in recent seasons. Having already leveraged its heritage car collection to buy Dennis out of his 25% share in 2017, McLaren had to look elsewhere when a cashflow crisis struck during the early months of the pandemic in 2020; the previously profitable Automotive arm, which had shores up revenues previously, was unable to carry on doing so as sales dried up.

McLaren secured a £150m loan from the National Bank of Bahrain (an obvious destination since Bahrain’s sovereign wealth fund owns 62.6% of the company) and planned to make 1200 staff redundant, although only 800 eventually departed. It also put the McLaren Technology Centre on the market for \$200m, eventually selling to the investment firm GNL for £170m. In December 2020 it sold a minority stake in McLaren Racing to the US sports investment vehicle MSP Sports Capital.

The financial engineering has continued apace

**McLaren Applied (above, left) has been sold to its existing management. Extreme E (top, right) is a new venture, whilst eSports (above, right) has already proved successful. WEC involvement (below) is also under consideration**



this year. In July McLaren announced a fresh round of refinancing, worth £550m, £400m of which was new capital from Saudi Arabia’s Public Investment Fund and investment company Ares Management, with a further £150m from existing shareholders via preference shares and equity warrants. This enabled McLaren pay off the Bank of Bahrain loan. Most recently it has sold off its McLaren Applied division, which has supplied F1’s standard ECU since 2008. Once seen as the group’s main engine of growth, McLaren Applied has been sold to its existing management – backed by the private equity firm Greybull Capital, a distressed-asset specialist which has also pounced on the remnants of Monarch Airlines and Carillion.

This leaves Automotive and Racing as McLaren’s revenue generators. When asked by

GP Racing whether this was a strategic decision or necessary financial engineering, Brown reiterates cars and racing are McLaren’s future.

“Paul Walsh, our chairman, felt that our core business is we’re an automotive and racing company,” says Brown. “It wasn’t about financial needs, it was more about strategically where the McLaren Group want to be long term, and they want to be in the automotive and racing business.

“I’m projected in a couple of years’ time to turn a profit. And I suspect other F1 teams already will, which is really how a business and a sporting franchise should run. And I think that’s why you’re seeing investors now coming in and acquiring teams. You’re going to see F1 franchises become much more valuable and more in line with what you see with NFL and NBA teams. You know, putting aside Ferrari because that’s ▶

PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; COLIN McMASTER; JAKOB EBREY; McLAREN

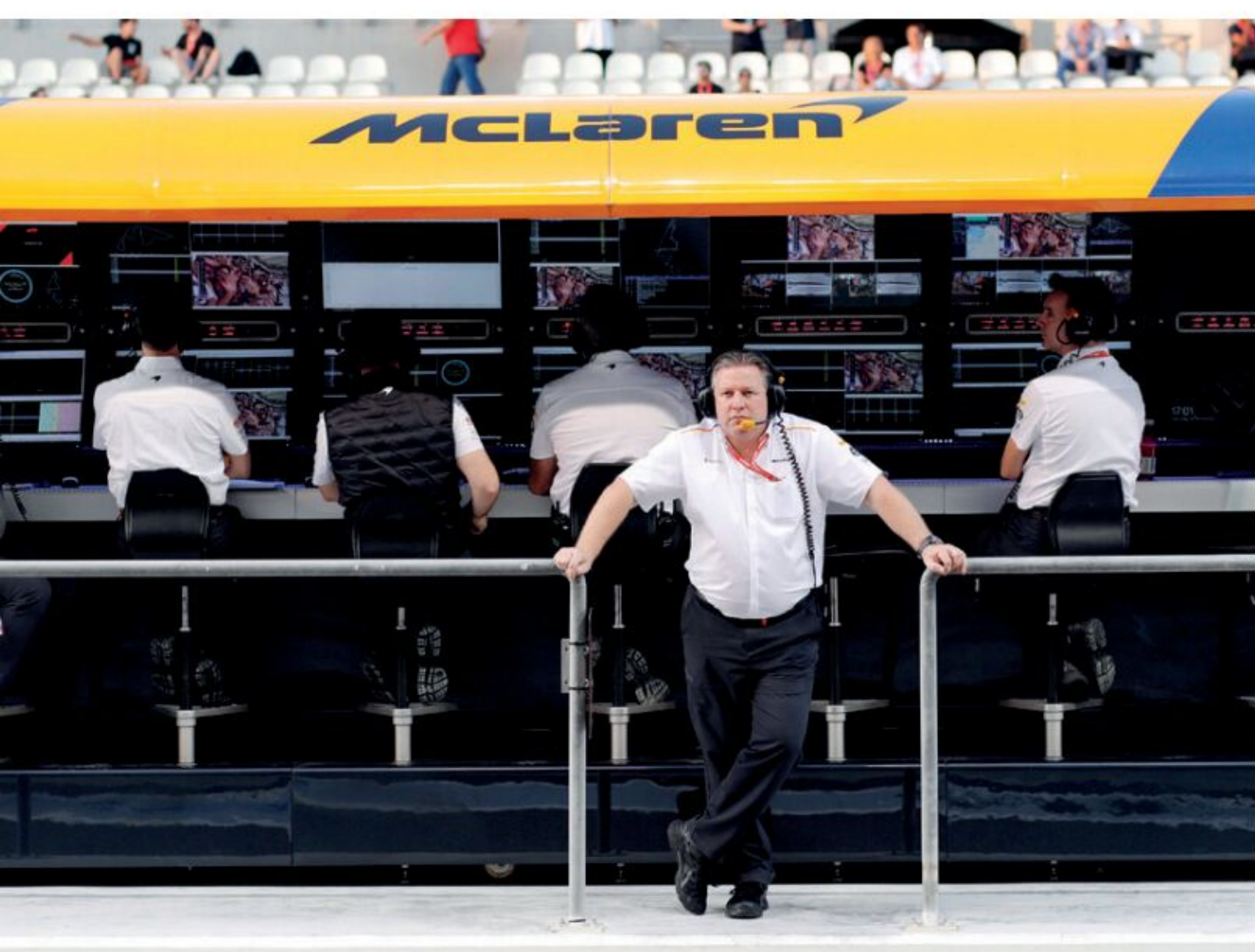


kind of combined with the road car company, you have to ask why F1 teams are trading for less than a billion dollars – in some instances significantly less – in a sport that is globally bigger, and has more revenues than other sports.”

McLaren Racing currently occupies Brown’s “significantly less” bracket – the deal with MSP Sports Capital valued the company at £560m. The F1 team continues to flourish under the leadership of Andreas Seidl, hired in 2019, while McLaren is in the process of expanding its stake in the Schmidt-Peterson IndyCar squad it joined as a partner in 2020, a process Brown likens to “renting before buying”. At the time of writing, with three rounds to go, Arrow McLaren SP is leading the championship ahead of seasoned entrants Chip Ganassi Racing and Team Penske.

There remains the possibility of further expansion into Formula E, in which McLaren

**F1 will always be at front and centre of McLaren’s operation according to Brown**



has an option to join the grid in season 9, and sportscar racing via the forthcoming LMDh car class which will be eligible to race in the World Endurance Championship and the US-based IMSA series. Currently these are merely being “evaluated”, and there are those in the world of motorsport who believe the putative Formula E entry was merely a ploy orchestrated by series bosses at a time when FE desperately needed to put out some good news, Mercedes having joined BMW and Audi in heading for the exit.

“We watch closely,” says Brown, “we know historically manufacturers come and go from

motorsport. So Mercedes leaving is not a positive, but Jaguar staying is a positive. And we also hear about other manufacturers that are probably going to come in.

“That will drive our decision-making and, of course, we’re paying attention to trends when we review motorsport activities. It has to fit our brand. It has to be financially viable. It needs to support our F1 mission and it can’t be operationally distracting. That’s kind of the lens we look through. IndyCar, Extreme E and eSports, they all ticked all those boxes, and Formula E and WEC continue to be under review

against those criteria. We’ll make the decision by the end of the year.”

McLaren Automotive – like the majority of car manufacturers – is feeling its way towards an electrified future, so there is potential fit. Andretti Autosports, which runs BMW’s entry, has partnered with McLaren before, when Fernando Alonso contested the Indy 500 in a McLaren-badged Andretti car in 2017.

That programme was far more successful than when McLaren tried to go it alone two years later, and the lessons drawn from that – avoiding those ‘operational distractions’ – have informed



**McLaren Racing joined forces with Schmidt Peterson Motorsport in 2020 to form Arrow McLaren SP for its IndyCar involvement**

**“WHEN I JOINED McLAREN I FELT WE WERE BEST SERVED BEING IN MULTIPLE FORMS OF MOTORSPORT, LIKE WE HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY, THAT WAS ALWAYS MY VISION WHEN I CAME IN, BUT IT’S ALL ABOUT TIMING AND MAKING SURE WE’RE IN A GOOD PLACE”** **ZAK BROWN**





PICTURES: MICHAEL LEVITT; SETEVEN TEE

McLaren's recent expansions into parallel formulae. If it does enter Formula E and WEC it will do so through partners which it might later colonise if the projects are deemed a success. There will be no going back to the days of Bruce McLaren, Denny Hulme, Tyler Alexander and others criss-crossing the globe, running in F1 races one weekend and Can-Am the next.

"Nothing can distract our F1 team," says Brown "As I experienced in Indianapolis in 2019, if you don't give the same dedication to Extreme E, IndyCar or even eSports, you'll fail. This is about building up different teams sharing some technical resources, technologies, things that are back at the factory. But I won't have one person working on F1 one weekend, and then they're going and working on IndyCar. That clearly didn't work in 2019."


McLaren's attempt to run a full IndyCar campaign with Alonso in 2019 came off the rails disastrously as engine politics (Honda was understandably not keen to work with Alonso again) forced it to split from Andretti, then slim down to a single-car entry for Indianapolis only – for which it failed to qualify. The litany of blunders was comical, stretching from the car being painted the wrong colour to Brown having to borrow a steering wheel from Cosworth because the in-house design wasn't finished.

"I'd hired Andreas Seidl [as F1 team principal], but he didn't start until Barcelona," says Brown. "I had Gil [de Ferran] in F1 [as sporting director], but his first race in IndyCar was the 500. I should have waited – I did that wrong and paid the price. So lots of learning from that. Now everyone from McLaren on the IndyCar team is dedicated to

IndyCar. They're past F1 personnel but they don't have dual roles because you can't be in two places at one time.

"2019 was probably one year too early is my learning there. I couldn't give IndyCar the time and attention it deserved and that's the result we got because of it. That's on me."

So McLaren is likely to carry on exploring other avenues of motor racing – but gradually, cautiously and rigorously.

"When I joined McLaren I felt we were best served being in multiple forms of motorsport, like we have been historically," says Brown. "That was always my vision when I came in, but it's all about timing and making sure we're in a good place. I joined McLaren at the height of our bottom, as it were, and that was not the right time. F1 remains the centre of gravity for us." 





# ROOM TO GROW

**Yuki Tsunoda** arrived in grand prix racing amid a whirlwind of hype, which only increased after his first race impressed the very biggest wigs in F1. His road since has been rocky and crash-filled, so why does Red Bull maintain faith in a driver who admits he isn't really that big a fan of Formula 1?

WORDS OLEG KARPOV

PICTURES



**motorsport**  
IMAGES

AND RED BULL CONTENT POOL



**W**hen he was already a racing driver, Yuki Tsunoda attended a school in his native Sagami-hara that years before had also hosted Ukyo Katayama, the man who up to this day still holds the record for most Formula 1 starts among Japanese drivers. It's an amazing coincidence given that, before Tsunoda, F1 history included just 17 other racers from Japan, a country with a current population of 126 million people.

"And when I moved to a different high school, it was Takuma Sato's old school," a smiling Yuki reveals in a conversation with *GP Racing*. But then he admits right away that he only recently became aware of this fact - and, in fact, of who Katayama and Sato are at all.

It's because Yuki Tsunoda was never an F1 fan - even though his father liked racing and even took part in local competitions.

"We went to a couple of F1 races," recalls Yuki. "First time was in Fuji when I was like seven. I remember it was raining. And I didn't like the sound. It was so noisy, I was covering my ears all the time. All I remember is that I really wanted to go back home as soon as possible.

"When I was young, I didn't like just racing. I liked all sports. Football, skiing, snowboarding, American football, basketball, any sport. So it wasn't just about racing for me at that point.

"I watched it on TV really just a couple of times. Only during my F2 season [last year], from the middle to the end of the championship, I started watching Formula 1."

It was another Japanese F1 driver who played a crucial part in Yuki's career, however. When he was member of Honda's Suzuka Circuit Racing School in 2016, Tsunoda flopped in a final shoot-out for a spot on the manufacturer's junior program. But Tsunoda was bailed out by Satoru Nakajima, Japan's first full-time Formula 1 racer and a former Lotus-Honda team-mate of Ayrton Senna's.

"It was, I think, in November," Tsunoda says. "Up until then I was quite good, always competing for P1 and P2. From March, because I had almost no experience, I started from quite low positions and improved a lot. But at that point I was still really weak under pressure. At that last test there were three races. I did jump starts in two races in a row, and also went off track once.

"So first I heard that I was dropped. But Satoru Nakajima came to the last event. Nakajima was there just [the] last day, and was watching at the chicane, and said he was impressed by my driving, especially in the chicane. So he recommended to Honda to take me to their junior program. ▶



After a promising first race for Tsunoda in Bahrain, the errors quickly crept in, with crashes in Imola, Portugal, Monaco, France (above) and Hungary (below)



PICTURES: RED BULL CONTENT POOL; CHALRES COATES; MARK SUTTON









PICTURES: CHALRES COATES; MARK SUTTON

“If I would be dropped, I was planning to just retire from racing. So if he wasn’t there, I think I wouldn’t be here.”

Of course, Yuki didn’t really know who Nakajima was. He just wanted to drive fast cars.

From then on, Tsunoda’s career developed rapidly. He won the regional Formula 4 series in 2017 and a year later dominated the national championship, winning seven races out of 14. After a successful Formula 3 test in Hungary, Honda then decided to move Tsunoda full-time to Europe, as he became a member of the Red Bull Junior Team.

Inevitably, it took him some time to adapt in Europe. As Yuki admits, he had difficulties expressing himself in English, which slowed down his progress in F3 a bit.

“Of course, Honda was helping me a lot,” he says. “For example, contacting with the apartments, things like that. I had also a personal trainer [from Red Bull], who helped me a lot. But I moved by myself, and in the first half of the season in F3 I struggled a little bit.

“As a kid, I went to international pre-school, and most of the time there I spent speaking English. Even when playing I had to speak English. So compared to most Japanese people my English was quite good. But I didn’t use it much from junior high school. So, to be honest, I forgot most of the vocabulary and, especially first three months after I moved to Switzerland, I was translating everything in my brain.

“First half of the season I struggled a little as well in Formula 3. I tried to write [my feedback] on the track map – like, understeer, oversteer. At that point that was enough. But last bits of details I didn’t know how I could explain.

“It took a little bit of time to make a perfect setup for me. But I improved step by step, and from the second half of season started also to talk a little bit more about details. [The year after] I moved to UK and it helped also quite a lot my English. That was a good step.”

Whatever language troubles and difficulties in adjusting to Europe, Tsunoda made up for through his natural speed. He scored his first F3 victory towards the end of 2019 and was competitive in F2 straight away in 2020. Only radio problems kept him from winning the third race of that campaign in the rain at the Red Bull Ring and, despite a few clumsy crashes, especially in early-season opening laps, Tsunoda would finish the year third, just a point off runner-up Callum Ilott.

That was more than enough to convince Helmut Marko that the rapid Honda protege deserved a shot at F1. The fact that the Japanese manufacturer was gearing up for its final



**Tsunoda with Helmut Marko (right), head of Red Bull’s driver development programme. Marko was key to Tsunoda’s rapid rise through the junior ranks to Formula 1**

season in the world championship might have influenced Marko – but he’s never particularly shy about rewarding the young and fast.

All in all, it took Tsunoda just two years after the Europe move to reach the pinnacle of motorsport. And F1 didn’t faze him – after all, he didn’t really know that much about it.

“For sure, it wasn’t what I expected,” Tsunoda says of his world championship debut. “I can say that before Bahrain I was really... I wasn’t scared or anything like that. I was even thinking I’d get a podium in first half of the season.”

Tsunoda was second-fastest in pre-season testing, aided by a DRS trick, and the first race left little cause for concern. He didn’t make Q3 – largely because he wanted to try getting through Q2 on the medium tyres, like team-mate Pierre Gasly – but even starting 13th and losing ground early on, Yuki would climb to a ninth, producing some stunning overtakes en route.

“After Bahrain I was really happy about my performance,” he says. “I mean, not fully happy because I didn’t do well in Q2, but yeah, I was quite happy for the performance and also the feedback from people like Ross Brawn, ►



**“WITHOUT TALENT, YOU CAN’T BECOME SUCCESSFUL, IT’S CLEAR. THE SECOND POINT FOR ME IS ALWAYS THE PASSION. YOU MUST LIVE FOR 365 DAYS FOR 24 HOURS FOR FORMULA 1”**

## FRANZ TOST

Helmut Marko, Franz Tost. So at that point I think I was a bit too... I was thinking a little bit easy about the situation.”

After his first F1 race Yuki Tsunoda was called “best rookie in years” by an F1 boss and “a future world champion” by his superiors at Red Bull. Half a year later, not many would agree with these assessments. And Yuki himself is ready to admit he probably underestimated the challenge.

“To be honest, yes,” he nods. “Of course, I was watching Formula 1 onboards [before]. And I thought there was just so much grip. Until Formula 2 you can control [the car] even if you have a big snap. And I was thinking that F1 if you have a big snap you can also control it.

“Yeah, I underestimated it. Yep. Completely.”

The good news is, he’s in good hands. If there is one team in F1 that knows how to work with rookie drivers, it’s AlphaTauri.

“They all underestimate F1,” grins Franz Tost, whose team gave so many drivers their F1 debut. “He is Japanese, the first Japanese with us. But the rest, I wouldn’t say there is something unique. He is like the other Red Bull Junior drivers, very high-skilled. He is fast and he wants to win immediately, sometimes therefore he is too impatient, but this was also with other drivers the case.

“When they come to Formula 1, they all think they know everything – they are fast, and they easily can do it. And then they have a good race, maybe at the beginning, and then they think ‘so, now I will show them my real potential’. And then they crash.”

Tsunoda did crash, big time, in Q1 at Imola, then spun in the race while attempting to pass

Lewis Hamilton on a damp track. Another difficult weekend in Portugal was followed by an outburst in Spain, where he questioned whether AlphaTauri was giving him the same equipment as Gasly, for which he apologised. Then he crashed again in FP2 in Monaco...

For a “best rookie in years”, Yuki was definitely making too many mistakes.

“I said to him, already after the Bahrain race, that he’s on the limit, he can’t be faster, he should be careful now,” continues Tost. “Then in Imola he crashed [on] his first run in qualifying.

“But you can’t warn a driver [beforehand]. He must experience it. And once he has experienced it, then he knows where’s the limit. But to find out the limit, you have to crash. Or at least to get into gravel with the car. And this happened with him, in qualifying, as well as in FP1. And we discussed this, we analysed everything.

“Fortunately, he is now in Faenza.”

Tost is being a bit facetious in suggesting there’s nothing unique about Tsunoda among Red Bull juniors. Were that the case, Yuki would probably not have been moved from Milton Keynes closer to the team’s Faenza base – something that wasn’t done with any of the past drivers of the former Toro Rosso outfit.

Now under the team boss’s watchful eye, Tsunoda is learning more about F1, regularly conversing with engineers, training, improving his already quite solid English and even seeing a sports psychologist. Also, as Yuki himself admits,



**Tsunoda himself admits that the first half of the season was poor in terms of results but is determined to improve in the remaining races**

this means he’s spending less time “in front of the screen” playing computer games.

In terms of talent and raw speed, Tsunoda might well be one of the most gifted drivers to ever race for the Italian team. But he is definitely a rough diamond in need of much more polishing.

“Without talent, you can’t become successful, it’s clear,” says Tost of his primary criteria for an F1 driver. “The second point for me is always the passion. You must live for 365 days for 24 hours for Formula 1. And the third point is already the discipline. The physical training, the nutrition, the complete preparation, your living style, everything must be adapted to Formula 1.

“Now it depends on Yuki himself how fast he learns, how fast he accepts all this, and how fast ▶



**AlphaTauri’s team principal Franz Tost (right), knows Tsunoda has to find his own limits and crashing is part of that process**

PICTURES: ANDY HONE



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Sixth in Hungary, after his practice shunt, was a better performance, but Belgium and Holland (above) weren't great for Tsunoda

he gets used to all this. From the speed, he is belonging to the top drivers. But, of course, he must learn now and he must be disciplined. This is in his hands. We can only advise him.”

The first half of Tsunoda's rookie season is over. And there's no talk of podiums anymore.

“I would say overall it was not good first half of the season in terms of results,” Tsunoda admits. “But I think I did a lot of experiments. So it was really up and down races and there was not any consistency. For example, I spun in France [in Q1], I did the second time [same] mistake. Which I was not doing much in the previous years. So yeah, a lot of things I am disappointed for my performance and also my driving. But I also learned from it.

“I need more laps. Hungary was a good example. I crashed in FP1 and I ruined my FP2. So I was in only one free practice totally until qualifying, and most of the drivers have three full free practice sessions to, you know, get used to it, to have experience. So I just need more laps. And to achieve that I need more consistency and I need more discipline, to be more calm.”


Before the summer break Yuki stayed in a hotel when he moved to Faenza, but in August he finally settled on a home. He definitely plans to stick around Northern Italy for a while longer.

And regardless of the early-season travails, his potential is still obvious.

“I think he improved a lot,” says Tost. “Otherwise he couldn't have finished sixth in Budapest, because it was quite clever how he drove over there. All his experience and knowledge, and what he learned in the first half of the season came together. And he got it, he got it in a really good way. And I hope that we continue in the same manner.”

Japan has probably not had this fast an F1 driver before. Given Tsunoda's ties with Red Bull, fans from the land of the Rising Sun may even dream that he'll become the first Japanese driver to win an F1 race. Ukyo Katayama – yes, that man who went to the same school in Sagami-hara some 30 years before Yuki – believes his young compatriot has the talent to reach that milestone. In one of his interviews in Japan, he even said he would cry if it happened.

“I'll try to make him cry, then!” laughs Yuki, before sharply changing his tone. “Of course, if I get P1 that will be great. But I think now I have to focus more to the consistency and laps.

“Of course, I am really happy to be a Japanese F1 driver, especially since from Kamui Kobayashi there was no Japanese driver [for seven years]. So, I'm really happy. And it is really is a shame there is no Suzuka this year, but I'm really happy if I can make Japanese fans happy with the results. But yeah... to achieve that I need more discipline and calmness. And laps.” 

**“I’LL TRY TO MAKE HIM [KATAYAMA] CRY, THEN! OF COURSE, IF I GET P1 THAT WILL BE GREAT. BUT I THINK NOW I HAVE TO FOCUS MORE TO THE CONSISTENCY AND LAPS”**





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# NIGEL ROEBUCK'S FORMULA ONE HEROES

## LUIGI MUSSO

PICTURES  **motorsport  
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AMONG  
THE SIZEABLE  
COLLECTION  
OF...

**memorabilia accumulated** through a lifetime in motor racing are two small trophies, which sit on a shelf in my office. One of them, won by my childhood hero Jean Behra, is from the 1957 Caen Grand Prix, while the other – from the same year – was awarded by the Automobile Club Roma, and is inscribed, ‘Luigi Musso, Campione Italiano Assoluto’.

Following the death of Alberto Ascari in a testing accident at Monza in May 1955, Italian motor racing was in some despair. Gone was as great a driver as motorsport has known, and a new native superstar was urgently sought. The hope was that ultimately two young men – Musso and Eugenio Castellotti – might fit the bill.

In those days racing drivers were paid nickels and dimes, but that was of no account to Musso and Castellotti, both of whom came from wealthy backgrounds, and raced cars because they had a passion for it. Luigi, the son of a diplomat, was born in Rome in 1924, and grew up in a *palazzo* on the fabled Via Veneto. It was after buying a 2-litre Maserati A6GCS that he really began to make his mark in Italian sportscar racing, in 1954 finishing third in the Mille Miglia, second in the Targa Florio.

There were also spasmodic drives for the Maserati F1 team. Musso won at Pescara, and finished the season with a superb



Following the death of Alberto Ascari in 1955, Musso was seen as one of the great new hopes for Italian motorsport

second place in the Spanish Grand Prix, behind Mike Hawthorn's Ferrari – but ahead of Juan Manuel Fangio's Mercedes. The following year (1955) Musso was a full-time member of the squad, and at the end of it switched camps to Ferrari.

Musso's Maranello career could hardly have got off to a better start: in the Argentine Grand Prix he handed over his car to Fangio, whose own broke, and Juan Manuel went on to take the chequered flag, giving Luigi a shared victory. In May, though, he was seriously injured in the Nürburgring 1000kms, and missed much of the season.

At the Italian Grand Prix Musso scrapped furiously with team-mate Castellotti for the lead, and later in the race was asked once more to give his car to Fangio. This time – an Italian with a chance to win at Monza – Luigi refused, and was leading with a few laps to go when a steering-arm broke.

Fierce rivals they might inevitably have been, but off the track Musso and Castellotti – like Tazio Nuvolari and Achille Varzi 20 years earlier – were always on friendly terms, and Luigi was stunned when Eugenio was killed in a testing accident at Modena in March 1957. Two months earlier they had shared the winning Ferrari with Masten Gregory in the Buenos Aires 1000kms.

A winner of the 1956 Argentine GP as part of shared drive with Fangio, Musso almost won at Monza that year in his own right, until a steering arm broke with three laps remaining





Now, suddenly, Musso was the only Italian driver of consequence, and it was a pressure he felt deeply. Fangio having left for Maserati, Musso was partnered at Ferrari by Peter Collins and the returning Mike Hawthorn, and it was not a situation Luigi found comfortable, for the two Englishmen were close buddies, and even in this most Italian of teams he felt something of an outsider.

“I got on very well with Mike and Peter,” said Phil Hill, then a member of the Ferrari sportscar squad, “but I really didn’t like the way they treated Musso – they never passed up a chance to belittle him.”

For all that, in 1957 Musso was emphatically Ferrari’s most successful driver. The team didn’t win any grands prix that year, but Luigi was second at Rouen and at Aintree, and won the non-championship race at Reims. Come season’s end, he was third in the championship, beaten only by Fangio and Stirling Moss.

In many ways, though, Musso’s life was in turmoil. For one thing, he had a new girlfriend, Fiamma Breschi, for whom he had left his wife and children; for another, his hopelessness with money was catching up with him. There were several ill-advised business investments, and as well as that he was an inveterate gambler. “Luigi,” Fangio told me, “could never resist a casino...”

For all that, the 1958 season began well enough. In Argentina, Musso was a close second to Moss’s Cooper, Ferrari being duped into believing Stirling would have to stop for new tyres, which he never did. There were victories for Luigi at the Syracuse GP and,

IT WAS RAW  
COURAGE LIKE  
YOU DON’T  
OFTEN SEE.  
THE MONZA  
BANKING WAS  
VERY FAST,  
AND ALSO  
ROUGH AS HELL

PHIL HILL

partnered with Olivier Gendebien, in the Targa Florio. At Monaco he was second, then survived unscathed a huge accident at Spa.

Next on the F1 agenda was the French Grand Prix, but the weekend before came the Race of Two Worlds, where Ferrari and Maserati took on the Indianapolis roadsters around Monza’s banked oval – and Musso shook the Americans by qualifying on pole at over 174mph.

“It was raw courage like you don’t often see,” said Hill. “The Monza banking was very fast, and also rough as hell. I watched Musso testing, and when I saw what he was going through, I said we’ve got to get a safety belt in that thing. It wasn’t a matter of thinking about accidents – it was the fact that he was getting almost bounced out of the cockpit! That was the first time belts were ever used in Europe – and they were just to keep us in the car...”

Come race day, Musso led the early laps, and mightily fought the roadster brigade until exhaustion from methanol fumes took its toll, and the car, handed over to an uninterested Hawthorn and later to Hill, eventually finished third. Musso’s heroism, I learned years later, made a deep impression on 23-year-old USAC rookie, one A.J. Foyt.

So to Reims, where Luigi had won the year before. This race traditionally paid more than any other on the European calendar, and another victory would go some way towards settling his gambling debts. In striving to stay with Hawthorn, to whom he had qualified second, on the 10th lap Musso put a wheel off at the exit of the ultra-fast first turn, Calvaire, and ran into a ditch. Thrown from the somersaulting Ferrari, he suffered severe head injuries, and died soon after reaching hospital.

“That weekend was my first F1 race,” said Hill, “and very sad it turned out to be. I liked Musso, who was always kind to me, and remember him as a good-looking guy with a dry sense of humour – there was a natural elegance about him, but also a kind of innate sadness. Somehow I wasn’t surprised it ended the way it did.”

Musso at the 1955 Dutch GP. It would be his second and final podium for Maserati before his switch to Ferrari for 1956









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No. 103

WORDS  
STUART COOLING  
PICTURES  
JAMES MANN

# MATRA MS120



Rocket technology married to an engine  
which sputtered out far too often



**f you know, you know.** To readers of a certain age – or those who have made the pilgrimage to historic festivals in recent years – the Matra name is synonymous with the fleeting appearance of a missile in French racing blue, accompanied by the cochlea-rattling symphony of its otherworldly V12. It's easy to forget Matra's only F1 constructors' title came courtesy of Cosworth's V8, with Jackie Stewart at the wheel, and that the V12 achieved its only world championship race victories attached to Ligier chassis.

Between one and the other the French aviation conglomerate went it alone in a three-season F1 spell during the early 1970s. While never quite hitting the heights of that 1969 campaign with JYS, it did manage to deliver the luckless Chris Amon to victory in an F1 car – though sadly in a non-championship event. It would find richer pickings in sportscar racing as it wound down its F1 operations, winning the Le Mans 24 Hours over three consecutive years.

The beginning (and the end) of the Matra F1 story is a typical one of French industry in the 1960s – ambition, expansion, consolidation, and an opportunistic eye for tapping into state funds. *Mécanique Aviation Traction* was founded as an aircraft constructor in the 1940s by Marcel Chassagny, who in 1964 made two key moves that would bring Matra into the



automobile world: hiring the entrepreneurial former engineer Jean-Luc Lagardère from Dassault Aviation as his new general manager; and acquiring friend and sometime Le Mans entrant René Bonnet's moribund car marque. A lover of racing, both horses and cars, Lagardère identified motorsport as a means of driving sales of Bonnet's smart little coupé, the Djet, and received sign-off from Chassagny to found Matra Sports.

Mated to a one-litre Ford engine, Matra's first F3 chassis enabled Jean-Pierre Beltoise and Jean Pierre Jaussaud to finish 1-2 in the 1965 French F3 series. But Lagardère was canny enough to recognise his team lacked the experience to step





up to F2 straight away, and his drivers were not from the top drawer. Via the supremely well-connected French journalist and race organiser Jabby Crombac, Lagardère engineered a meeting with successful F3/F2 team boss Ken Tyrrell.

Initially less than keen, Tyrrell accepted an invitation to the Matra facility at Velizy, outside Paris, and was blown away by the quality of its F3 car's engineering. Stewart, Tyrrell's F2 driver for 1966 alongside Jacky Ickx, also wrinkled his nose at this who-are-they-anyway marque until Matra flew over a car for him to test. JYS described it as "pure quality".

What set the Matra chassis apart was the slightly over-engineered nature of the structure, which yielded unparalleled solidity and enabled a driver of Stewart's class to steer with confidence and precision. The aerospace heritage was writ large on the exterior, with its rows of meticulously aligned rivets, and on the inside, where the box sections on either side of the cockpit which housed the fuel were sealed with a polymer resin. Lining the fuel tank in this way was costlier and more difficult, but it facilitated extra internal bracing which improved the chassis' torsional rigidity. It was an advantage which would last until bags became mandatory in 1970.

Most remarkably, Matra's leading engineers had few formal qualifications and were largely self-taught. Gérard Ducarouge had a degree in aeronautical engineering and joined from Nord Aviation's missile programme. He would go on to lead the design of race-winning cars at Ligier and Lotus. Bernard Boyer had raced motorcycles, competing in the 24-hour Bol d'Or in 1956, and picked up what he knew about engineering by working as a mechanic on the Panhard and Alpine cars he co-drive at Le Mans in 1962 and 1963. Before joining Matra, Boyer's sole design credit was the Sirmac Formula Junior car.

MATRA MS120

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Similarly, Georges Martin had begun his career at Simca before graduating to the design office, where he created the 'Poissy' small-displacement engine which motivated sundry Simcas, Chryslers, Talbots and Peugeots until the turn of the 1990s.

The relationship with Tyrrell blossomed but it remained Matra's plan to contest F1 with its own team... and its own engine. The stars aligned as F1 shifted to become a three-litre formula in 1966 and the French government developed an interest in motorsport as a vehicle of national prestige. Lagardère secured sponsorship from Elf, the largely government-owned oil company recently formed through the

consolidation of several smaller firms. Then, in April 1967, he sweet-talked six million Francs out of the taxpayer's wallet to subsidise development of a new V12 engine.

Georges Martin had never designed a bespoke racing unit, so he quietly arranged for the British manufacturer BRM to work on it on a consultancy basis. Within weeks, the cross-channel collaboration was snuffed out when BRM proprietor Sir Alfred Owen boasted

REMARKABLY,  
MATRA'S LEADING  
ENGINEERS HAD  
FEW FORMAL  
QUALIFICATIONS  
AND WERE  
LARGELY  
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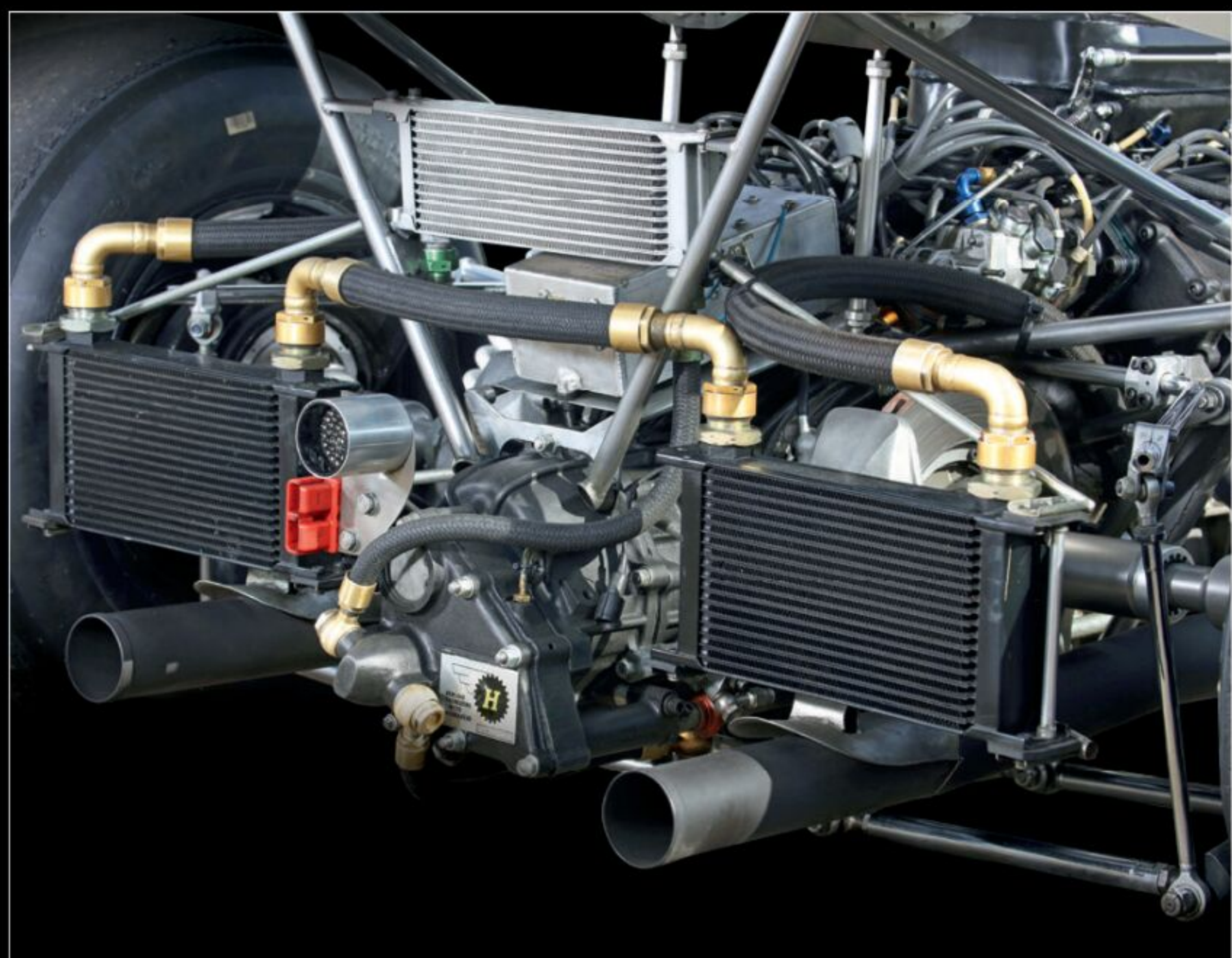
about it and the French government took umbrage, threatening to take its money back. Design work resumed solely in-house, while Martin came to terms with the task of going from blank sheet of paper to competitive engine within fewer than 12 months – even as hype and expectations stoked up by the French press raged around Matra. When Tyrrell reached a deal with Cosworth and proposed running Jackie Stewart in a Boyer-designed Matra-Ford in F1 for 1968, Lagardère said yes. ▶





Tyrrell's success in blue drew the heat from the works Matra International team, which laboured through 1968 as the V12 arrived late, thirsty and temperamental. Beltoise managed second in the rain at Zandvoort, with a little help from Dunlop's class-leading wet tyre, but crossed the line more than a minute and a half down on Stewart's similar but Cosworth-powered car. Come the end of the season Matra withdrew its works team, ostensibly to focus on sportscar racing, while Tyrrell flew the flag in F1 in 1969 under the Matra International name with Stewart in the new MS80 chassis... and a Ford engine.

This arrangement couldn't last. Matra had been trying to tie up a marketing arrangement with Ford, to little avail, and at the end of 1969 it concluded an alliance with Simca which gave it a presence in all of the Chrysler-owned company's dealerships in the growing European Economic Community. There would be no question of Tyrrell campaigning Boyer's new MS120 with a Ford-badged engine. A week after tying



up the drivers' and constructors' championships at Monza, Stewart tested the Matra V12 at Albi, rumoured to be hosting the following year's French GP. He came away nonplussed, feeling the engine had "no bite" compared with the DFV; all that extra reciprocating weight and internal drag over a V8 sapped the V12's midrange fizz. 'Leisurely' may not seem an apt descriptive term for an engine which announced itself to spectators like a thunderclap direct to the eardrum, but this was the feeling which transmitted itself through the seat of JYS's pants. The world champion and his team were sticking with Ford, come what may.

Thus the Tyrrell-Matra partnership was dissolved and the works team returned for 1970, fielding a pair of *cent-vingts* for Beltoise and Henri Pescarolo under the Equipe Matra Elf name. As the reigning constructors' champion, it carried great expectation from within F1 as well as from its home country, but the MS120 was no lazy sequel to the title-winning MS80, even if resources had been stretched by the creation of a four-wheel-drive car in 1969 which Stewart had tried and rejected. This was a period of wild experimentation with aerodynamics. Pylon-mounted aerofoils had been introduced, then rapidly banned on safety grounds. Where the MS80 had been rounded, even bulbous, the MS120 was flatter and more angular around the flanks, and much narrower between the front wheels as

# MATRA MS120

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Boyer and Ducarouge sought to create downforce via the body surfaces as well as the wings and dive planes.

The 60-degree V12 engine retained the same essential architecture from its inception but underwent a detailed overhaul. The biggest amendment was the strengthening of the aluminium sump and block castings to enable the engine to function as a stressed element of the MS120 chassis. This new version, designated MS12, featured a revised head design with narrower valve angles and a flatter cylinder crown, and a stronger aluminium casting to fulfil its role as a structural join between the tub and the upper rear suspension mountings.

Ford-engined cars continued to show Matra the way on





track, though, as Beltoise finished fourth at the opening round behind a Brabham, a McLaren and a March. The top 10 would grow more competitive as Ferrari got on top of its new 312B and Lotus debugged the 72. From mid-season it was all about Lotus and Jochen Rindt; Hethel's new wedge-shaped chassis, with the fuel tank behind the driver and the radiators ahead of the rear wheels, pointed to the future. Beltoise and Pescarolo picked up three podiums between them as Matra finished seventh (out of eight) in the constructors' world championship.

Feeling the drivers hadn't extracted the most from the car, Matra dropped Pescarolo from its F1 line-up and appointed Chris Amon as team leader, which served to put Beltoise's nose out of joint. In the non-championship Argentine GP in January 1971, Amon won on aggregate over two heats ahead of a mixed F1/F5000 field which included a young Carlos Reutemann.

Amon then qualified second for the F1 championship opener in South Africa but made a slow start and finished fifth.

The definitive B-spec of the MS120 was introduced at round two in Spain, six weeks later, with more rounded flanks, a nose cone in place of dive planes, and an upgraded version of the engine featuring revised valvegear and a new intake system fed by an item which would become *de rigueur* in F1: an airbox. Amon qualified and finished third, 58s behind Stewart, the winner. In Monaco both cars went out with transmission failure; Amon qualified fourth but got away last, almost half a lap behind, after his engine lost fuel pressure on the grid. The rest of the season panned out similarly as the engine and its oil system remained temperamental, forcing the team to withdraw from the Austrian GP entirely to focus on development.


Next time out, at Monza, the V12 was finally delivering the horsepower claimed for it. During practice Amon ran chassis

## NEXT TIME OUT, AT MONZA, THE V12 WAS FINALLY DELIVERING THE HORSEPOWER CLAIMED FOR IT. DURING PRACTICE AMON RAN CHASSIS NUMBER SIX, AND QUALIFIED ON POLE

number six, photographed here, and qualified on pole despite an attempt by the organisers to strike off his time in favour of Ickx's Ferrari. Choosing chassis four for the race, Amon ducked and dived in the multi-car lead battle, then established himself up front at mid-distance. With nine laps to go, Amon reached for a tear-off – and his whole visor detached from his crash helmet. Struggling to see, and stymied by a vapour lock in the fuel system, he trailed home sixth.

Matra was beginning to lose faith in its ability to compete in F1, slimming down to a one-car entry for Amon in 1972, for which chassis six was upgraded to C-spec with

new front suspension and a revised airbox. Further revisions to the engine's cylinder heads nudged claimed power north of 460bhp but by this point Amon was beginning to doubt the results registered on the dyno. It is perhaps fitting that Matra registered its best performance of the season at the French GP at Clermont Ferrand, where Amon put the new D-spec MS120 on pole by nearly a second from McLaren's Denny Hulme. As seemingly ever with Amon, disaster struck while he was leading comfortably: a puncture, after which he smashed the lap record battling back to third place.

At the end of 1972 Matra departed F1, leaving a fascinating question: would it have achieved the results it warranted with better drivers, or simply drivers with better luck? 



### RACE RECORD

**Starts** 54  
**Wins** 0  
**Poles** 2  
**Fastest laps** 2  
**Podiums** 5  
**Championship points** 46

### SPECIFICATION

**Chassis** Aluminium monocoque  
**Suspension** Double wishbones with coil springs/dampers front and rear  
**Engine** 60-degree naturally aspirated V12  
**Engine capacity** 2993cc  
**Power** 450bhp @ 11,000 rpm  
**Gearbox** Five-speed manual  
**Brakes** Discs front and rear  
**Tyres** Goodyear  
**Weight** 580kg  
**Notable drivers** Chris Amon, Jean-Pierre Beltoise, Henri Pescarolo







# BIG IN JAPAN

Manufacturers, drivers and races from this motorsport mad country have all left their mark on Formula 1...

▼ As debut races go, the 1976 Japanese GP wasn't a bad start. The first running of the race had the stunning backdrop of Mount Fuji and a world championship to decide. In a race won by Mario Andretti in atrocious conditions, James Hunt did enough to claim the world title, finishing third after rival Niki Lauda withdrew







Ukyo Katayama made his debut in 1992 with Larrouse, and then had four seasons with Tyrrell. 1997 was his final year in F1 when, with Mild Seven backing, he landed a seat at Minardi. This shunt, at Monza, was symptomatic of his struggles and Ukyo announced his retirement three GPs later at his home race, but he remains the Japanese driver with the most F1 starts



Honda had already been a successful engine supplier, first to Williams from 1984-1987 and then Lotus in 1987 and 1988, before providing its power units to McLaren from 1988 to 1992. In those five seasons Honda-engined McLarens won 44 of the 80 races, claimed 53 pole positions, and secured four consecutive drivers' and constructors' championship doubles



Japan only returned to the F1 calendar in 1987, after a 20-year break, but by 1994 it was hosting a second race – the Pacific GP – in addition to the race at Suzuka. The venue was the stunning TI Circuit, also known as Aida. Set practically on top of a mountain, it was two hours from the nearest city and the race only ran twice before it was dropped as interest in F1 in Japan waned





▶ Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates victory in the 2019 Austrian GP with Honda technical director Toyoharu Tanabe, marking Honda's first win as an engine supplier in the V6 hybrid era. After seven years away Honda returned to F1 to supply engines to old flame McLaren for 2015. The reunion went badly, but as the two were parting along came the Red Bull-backed teams. In 2018 Honda supplied Toro Rosso, then added Red Bull to its roster. Success followed...



▼ The Honda Motor Company had only built its first road car in 1960 when, two years later, it started developing the RA271 for F1. The car, powered by a Honda V12, made its debut at 1964 German GP. Then in Honda's 11th race Richie Ginther claimed the company's first F1 win, in the 1965 Mexican GP, driving an RA272. One more win followed, John Surtees taking an RA300 to victory at Monza in 1967, before Honda withdrew from F1 at the end of 1968







Honda took full control of BAR-Honda for 2006 but dropped Takuma Sato from its line-up, an unpopular move back in Japan. In response to this Super Aguri was founded by former F1 driver Aguri Suzuki, with help from Honda. Using Honda customer engines and updated 2002 Arrows A23 chassis, Sato (left) was initially joined by compatriot Yuji Ide



Kunimitsu Takahasi was following in the footsteps of John Surtees and Mike Hailwood when he drove a privateer Tyrrell in the 1977 Japanese GP. Takahasi was the first Japanese rider to win a motorcycle GP, piloting a 250cc Honda to victory in Germany in 1961. He finished ninth in his only F1 outing but raced on in sportscars, including eight Le Mans, and Japanese F3000 until 1994







▲ Ayrton Senna was adored in Japan and was on pole for the first Pacific GP in 1994, his second race for Williams. Senna was beaten away from the start by Michael Schumacher, and a tap from Mika Häkkinen pushed the Williams into a spin, to be collected by Nicola Larini's Ferrari. Sadly it would be the last time the Japanese fans would get to see Senna in action

◀ This picture seems to show the Renault mechanics applauding McLaren's Kimi Räikkönen as he wins the 2005 Japanese GP from 17th on the grid. In truth Renault's Giancarlo Fisichella had been battling to stay ahead of Räikkönen and was only 0.173s clear as they started the last lap. Kimi dived ahead at the first corner and so pulled off an unlikely win, his last for McLaren

► Torrential rain was the order of the day on the Saturday of the 2010 Japanese GP at Suzuka. The inclement weather had started just before final practice on Saturday morning and qualifying was delayed three times before finally being postponed to Sunday morning. With time on their hands the Red Bull mechanics decided to fashion something that would cope with the rivers of water sloshing down the pit lane...







*Of the three Japanese drivers who qualified for their home race in 1976, only one of them – Masahiro Hasemi – was in a car of Japanese manufacturer, the Kojima. Hasemi qualified 10th in the dry and in Sunday's downpour the KE007 became the first Japanese car to start a GP. Hasemi was 11th, and given fastest lap until the error was spotted...*



*This was the aftermath of Ayrton Senna vs Alain Prost part 2, after Senna had taken out Prost at the start of the 1990 Japanese GP. The pair had clashed at Suzuka the previous year, when they were both McLaren drivers, but this time round Senna knew that if Prost – now driving for Ferrari – didn't win then he would be crowned world champion for a second time*



*Suzuka's Ferris wheel, also known as Jupiter, towers over the Honda-owned circuit and has provided an instantly-recognisable backdrop. In 1994 Damon Hill kept his championship hopes alive by beating title rival Michael Schumacher into second, in a race that was stopped after 14 laps and then restarted for 36 laps. The final result was decided on the aggregate of both parts of the race, the last time this occurred in F1*





*In 2006 three of the 11 F1 teams had Japanese owners, even if none of them were operated from Japan. There were full manufacturer entries from Honda (left) and Toyota (centre), and the cars from Super Aguri (right), seen by many as an unofficial Honda 'B' team*



► 14 years after Noritake Takahara, Masahiro Hasemi and Kazuyoshi Hoshino started the 1976 Japanese GP, Aguri Suzuki claimed a different sort of F1 first when he claimed the first podium for a Japanese driver. And even better he achieved it in his home race at Suzuka. Suzuki, driving a Larrousse-entered Lola, benefitted from the team's decision to run him without a stop, and he finished third as Nelson Piquet won







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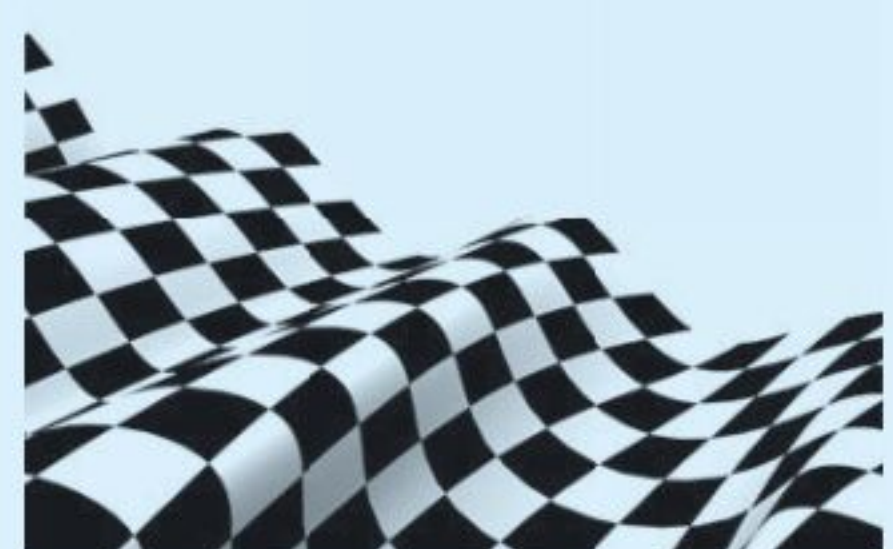
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FINISHING STRAIGHT

# RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 12

## THE BELGIAN GP IN 3 KEY MOMENTS



### 1 "Aggressive" qualifying strategy earns Russell his first podium

While Sunday's race amounted to an un-edifyingly farcical handful of laps behind the Safety Car, Saturday at Spa at least permitted some of F1's youngest and most exciting talents to shine.

McLaren's Lando Norris looked to be almost a shoo-in for pole position, having topped the first two segments of a rain-affected session. Super-committed in the damp early phases, Norris was eventually caught out as the rain intensified again ahead of Q3 – enough to require full wets instead of intermediate tyres.

His McLaren MCL35M snapped into oversteer at the second apex of Eau Rouge then his front axle gripped again as he applied opposite lock, pitching him into the barriers on the left at a wince-inducing velocity.

After the mess was cleared it was George Russell's chance to execute a strategy the Williams engineering team described as "aggressive".

While the rest of the field had undertaken their Q1 sighting laps on full wets so as to preserve their allocation of intermediates, Russell and team-mate Nicholas Latifi were sent out on the inters to build confidence on a compound which would become the default choice as the standing water cleared. Though Latifi spun off, both were quick enough to reach Q2 and Russell used another set of intermediates to make Q3.

Norris's accident and the 40-minute stoppage which ensued played straight into Russell's hands when Q3 resumed, enabling him to pit after a single exploratory out-lap on wets and fit his original set of intermediates – which had been sitting in their tyre blankets throughout.

"That first set we'd used when it was really quite wet [at the start of Q1]," said Dave Robson, Williams' head of vehicle performance. "So, they weren't badly damaged when we pitted off them.

And then there had been such a long period of time since Q1 run one they were all hot and back up to temperature."

Russell's pit visit also put him out of sequence with the majority of the other cars on track, and his first timed lap was a respectable (for the conditions) if not earth-shattering 2m08.059, merely ninth fastest. What nobody bar Russell and Williams knew was that this had merely been a prep lap to get his tyres and brakes up to temperature.

"I basically pushed but didn't deploy my battery," said Russell. "I saved it all for the last lap because it's quite potent around here."

Russell's next lap was nearly eight seconds quicker and good for provisional pole. Even wet-weather wizard Lewis Hamilton couldn't beat it, though Max Verstappen pipped Russell with the clock in the red. George wasn't to know, but he came mighty close to victory...



Russell's superb qualifying performance was one of the few good things to come out of Spa

PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; CHARLES COATES; MARK SUTTON; ALASTAIR STALEY



## 2 Rules may change after shortest-ever F1 race

At Spa-Francorchamps Formula 1 suffered its most embarrassing race day since the 2005 US GP. At least the fans at Indianapolis Motor Speedway got to watch a contest of sorts, if only between six cars; at Spa a stoic crowd, which had endured a full day of sheeting rain, left baffled as the result was declared after three laps behind the Safety Car.

Thus the 2021 Belgian Grand Prix entered the record books as the shortest-ever world championship race, a distinction previously held by the 1991 Australian Grand Prix, which was red-flagged while race leader Ayrton Senna was on his 17th lap (the results were eventually declared with the order as it was on lap 14). Unlike Adelaide '91, where the FIA initially tried to restart the race, this time around the consensus was that a complete stoppage was the right decision, given appalling prevailing conditions.

The FIA delayed the start several times, then completed a formation lap before suspending the start procedure. Later it paused the mandatory three-hour race window, declaring 'force majeure', in an attempt to stretch the window of available time. Both race director Michael Masi and FIA president Jean Todt said that when the grid was sent out again for three more laps behind the Safety Car, this was "an attempt to start the race" but "conditions quickly worsened".

Since leader Max Verstappen crossed the control line on his way into the pits, officially starting his fourth lap, the rules stating two 'racing' laps had to be completed for a result to be declared were observed, and half-points were awarded. Attention now turns to whether this is an absurd regulation which encourages box-ticking.

"We need a better solution when that type of situation happens," said McLaren boss Zak Brown. "I don't think anyone would say it felt right calling that a race."



The Safety Car leads Max Verstappen and the rest of the field into La Source and, hey presto, we have a 'race'...

## 3 Pérez starts after crashing en route to the grid

Adding to the tapestry of farce in Belgium, Sergio Pérez was credited with 19th place despite crashing at Les Combes on his way to the grid. Red Bull took advantage of the delayed start to repair Pérez's car, but he had to start from the pitlane having qualified seventh.

Even this required some negotiations as team manager Jonathan Wheatley lobbied the race director during the red-flag period. Eventually the matter of whether Pérez could start the race, or whether he had received outside assistance and technically retired, was referred to the stewards. Their reading of the rules was that the race was yet to start.

"It was much bigger than the accident Max had in Hungary last year [on the way to the grid]," said team principal Christian Horner. "You could see the guys from Max's car getting stuck in and helping. It was a true team effort."

Pérez thought his 'race' was over before it had even started. Eventually, it wasn't...



## RESULTS ROUND 12

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS / 29.8.21 / 1 LAP



1st	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	3m27.071s
2nd	George Russell	Williams	+1.995s
3rd	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+2.601s
4th	Daniel Ricciardo	McLaren	+4.496s
5th	Sebastian Vettel	Aston Martin	+7.479s
6th	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri	+10.177s
7th	Esteban Ocon	Alpine	+11.579s
8th	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+12.608s
9th	Nicholas Latifi	Williams	+15.484s
10th	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	+16.166s
11th	Fernando Alonso	Alpine	+20.590s
12th	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	+22.414s
13th	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo	+24.163s
14th	Lando Norris	McLaren	+27.109s
15th	Yuki Tsunoda	AlphaTauri	+28.329s
16th	Mick Schumacher	Haas	+29.507s
17th	Nikita Mazepin	Haas	+31.993s
18th	Kimi Räikkönen	Alfa Romeo	+36.054s
19th	Sergio Pérez	Red Bull	+38.205s
20th	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin	+44.108s*

\*includes 10s penalty for modifying car during temporary race stoppage

Retirements: None

Fastest lap

No fastest lap recorded

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



CLIMATE



AIR TEMP

14°C

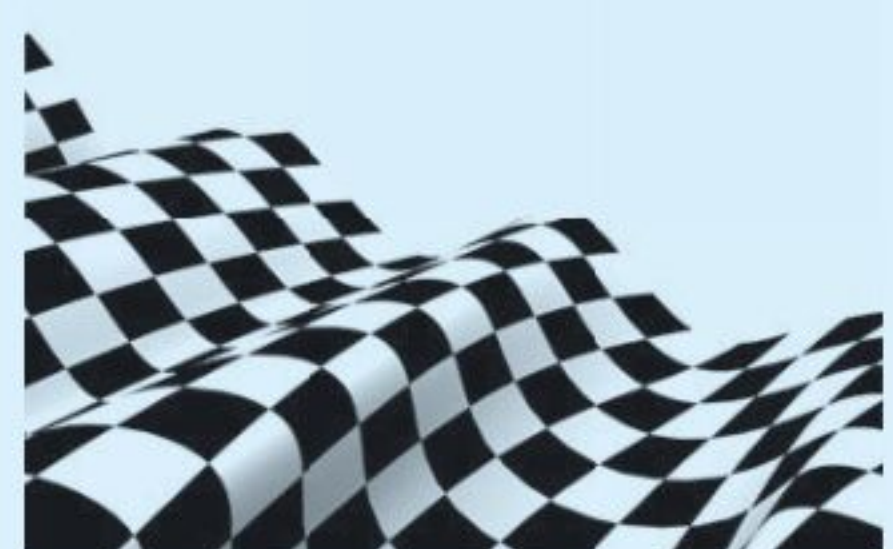
TRACK TEMP

15°C

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1 Hamilton	202.5pts	11 Alonso	38pts
2 Verstappen	199.5pts	12 Vettel	35pts
3 Norris	113pts	13 Tsunoda	18pts
4 Bottas	108pts	14 Stroll	18pts
5 Pérez	104pts	15 Russell	13pts
6 Sainz	83.5pts	16 Latifi	7pts
7 Leclerc	82pts	17 Räikkönen	2pts
8 Ricciardo	56pts	18 Giovinazzi	1pt
9 Gasly	54pts	19 Schumacher	0pts
10 Ocon	42pts	20 Mazepin	0pts

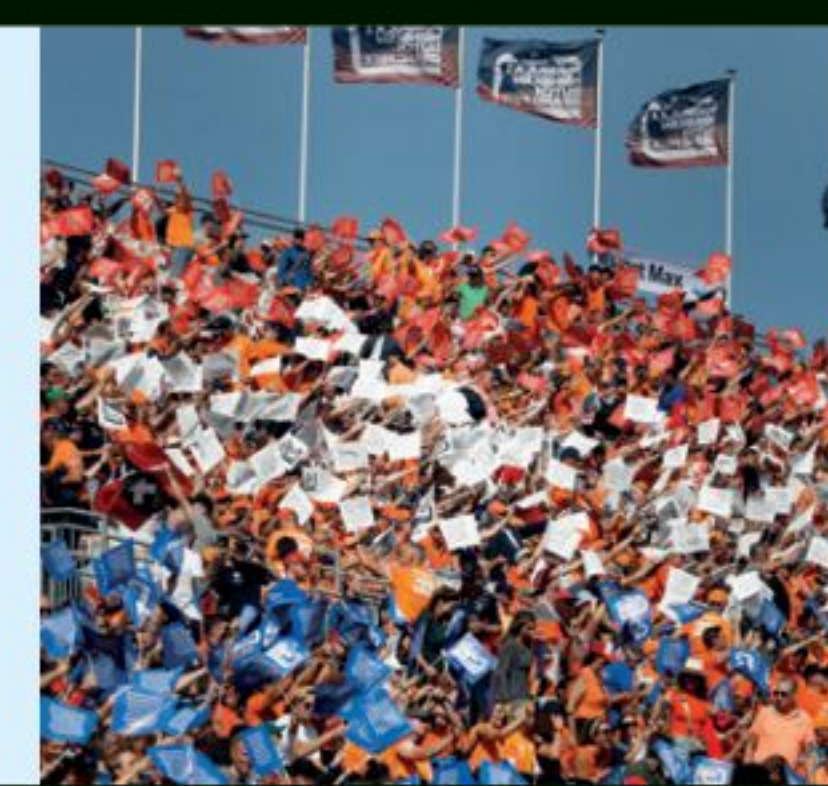




FINISHING STRAIGHT

## RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 13

THE DUTCH GP  
IN 3 KEY MOMENTS

Verstappen was never seriously challenged on his way to a long-awaited win on home soil

## 1 Mercedes has no answer to Verstappen's searing speed

**After the first-lap drama** of Silverstone, the mess of Budapest and that soggy farce at Spa, a flat-out dry race at Zandvoort represented a reset for the world championship battle – a chance to see where the main protagonists really stood.

For Mercedes, it was a sobering lesson. Max Verstappen dominated from pole position in front of his adoring public and Lewis Hamilton never really got a look in. Losing almost all of Friday's second practice session to an oil-related engine problem didn't help Hamilton's cause, but it's doubtful even a clean weekend would have changed the result.

"We were struggling a bit around Turn 2, 3, especially on Friday," said Mercedes engineering director Andrew Shovlin. "The banked corners are very unusual, and certainly the sequence of Turn 2-3 is tricky. The balance we had on the simulator was quite different to the one we had [in reality]

on Friday. And that was why we had to move it a bit more in terms of set-up than we do normally."

Mercedes chipped away, and the final qualifying gap was only 0.038s, but Max said he lost 0.15s to a double upshift (4th-6th) over the bumps coming out of the banked Turn 3, then his DRS failed to open on the run to the line, costing another 0.1-0.15s according to Red Bull boss Christian Horner.

Mercedes was also struggling to get W12 to behave through that banked third turn. "It is mainly the exit of 2, they're a lot quicker, and particularly 3, they're a lot quicker," Hamilton said after qualifying. "I was told 0.18s, so close to two-tenths we're losing in that area. It's difficult to say exactly what it is, but there's something – some characteristic of our car that doesn't like that corner."

So Mercedes was a decent chunk off the pace here – Horner reckoned Red Bull had "a tenth in

hand, maybe two" after better optimising the RB16B's setup compared to the similar high-downforce demands of Hungary – and, although Hamilton pursued Verstappen aggressively in the race, Max remained out of reach.

With Sergio Pérez completely absent from the lead battle, Mercedes split strategies – putting Valtteri Bottas onto a one-stopper to try to create a roadblock for Verstappen. Horner said Red Bull would have sacrificed victory to Bottas if necessary, to ensure Verstappen finished ahead of Hamilton, but Max easily re-passed Bottas on track regardless, and the fact Pirelli made a conservative compound choice for F1's first visit here in 36 years made tyre conservation less crucial.

"I was flat-out, just trying to stay as close as possible," said Hamilton, who on this occasion simply had no answer to Max's magic.

PICTURES: MARK SUTTON; CHARLES COATES; GLENN DUNBAR



## 2 Bottas in “cheeky” fastest lap attempt

In what could be neatly summarised as an ‘uneventful race on a mega circuit’, one of the few moments of intrigue involved a bizarre ‘battle’ between the Mercedes drivers for the fastest lap bonus point.

With only a handful of laps remaining, Mercedes instructed Valtteri Bottas to make what it described as a “precautionary” second pitstop because of “tyre vibrations”. Bottas was given a set of soft Pirellis but explicitly told not to go for fastest lap, which at the time was already held by Hamilton.

Bottas subsequently beat Hamilton’s 1m13.124s by almost six tenths of a second, despite an explicit “Valtteri, it’s James” radio message from Mercedes’ strategy chief Vowles, telling Bottas to abort his attempt through the final sector. Mercedes then stopped Hamilton in kind, and Lewis retook the bonus point with a last-lap effort of 1m11.097s – nearly 1.5s quicker than Bottas.

“I was pushing on the first lap, sector one, two, like flat-out and then they started asking me to slow down, and I was just playing around really,” explained Bottas. “I knew Lewis was going to stop as well, and I knew that with a decent amount of lifting [from me] in the last sector he would get it, so no drama.”

“That was a bit cheeky, but understandable,” was Toto Wolff’s take. “Valtteri is always on the receiving end, because this championship is so tight. He lifted off massively in the last sector. You have to understand also at that point, there’s a certain degree of frustration of Valtteri, and at the end, everything is good. We’re going to talk about it, but in a most amicable and professional way.”

Much harder to rein in a driver you know is shortly leaving, however...

**Bottas was only “playing around” when he set a fastest lap, forcing Hamilton to go quicker**



**Gasly continued his superb season for AlphaTauri, finishing well ahead of the second Red Bull driven by Pérez**

## 3 Gasly fills the Pérez void

Christian Horner praised Sergio Pérez for his “fantastic” drive from a pitlane start to finish eighth, but it fell far below expectations. Pérez couldn’t get near Max’s pace in practice then was dumped out of qualifying in Q1. The first run was too slow, then Pérez failed to start his second flying lap on time.

Armed with a fresh Honda engine for the race, Pérez flat-spotted his front right tyre after locking up while trying to pass Nikita Mazepin’s Haas early on. This, and a subsequent collision with Lando Norris, cost Pérez sixth he reckoned.

Step forward a prior occupant of that second Red Bull seat – Pierre Gasly – who qualified and finished fourth for sister squad AlphaTauri, a result he described as a “small win” and a “perfect weekend for us”. Gasly was chased all race by Charles Leclerc, while the second Ferrari of Carlos Sainz, who crashed in final practice, struggled and lost sixth to the Alpine of Fernando Alonso with two laps left.

# RESULTS ROUND 13

ZANDVOORT / 5.9.21 / 72 LAPS



1st	Max Verstappen	Red Bull	1h30m05.395s
2nd	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	+20.932s
3rd	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	+56.460s
4th	Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri	+1 lap
5th	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+1 lap
6th	Fernando Alonso	Alpine	+1 lap
7th	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	+1 lap
8th	Sergio Pérez	Red Bull	+1 lap
9th	Esteban Ocon	Alpine	+1 lap
10th	Lando Norris	McLaren	+1 lap
11th	Daniel Ricciardo	McLaren	+1 lap
12th	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin	+2 laps
13th	Sebastian Vettel	Aston Martin	+2 laps
14th	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo	+2 laps
15th	Robert Kubica	Alfa Romeo	+2 laps
16th	Nicholas Latifi	Williams	+2 laps
17th	George Russell	Williams	+3 laps/gearbox
18th	Mick Schumacher	Haas	+3 laps

### Retirements

Yuki Tsunoda	AlphaTauri	48 laps - power unit
Nikita Mazepin	Haas	41 laps - hydraulics

### Fastest lap

Lewis Hamilton 1m11.097s on lap 72

### TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



### CLIMATE

Sunny

### AIR TEMP

21°C

### TRACK TEMP

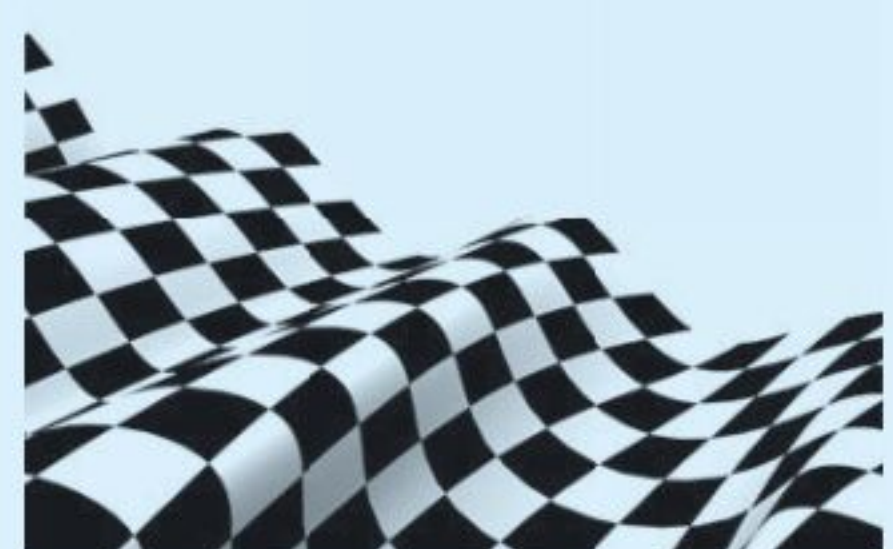
35°C

### DRIVERS’ STANDINGS

1 Verstappen 224.5pts	12 Vettel 35pts
2 Hamilton 221.5pts	13 Tsunoda 18pts
3 Bottas 123pts	14 Stroll 18pts
4 Norris 114pts	15 Russell 13pts
5 Pérez 108pts	16 Latifi 7pts
6 Leclerc 92pts	17 Räikkönen 2pts
7 Sainz 89.5pts	18 Giovinazzi 1pt
8 Gasly 66pts	19 Schumacher 0pts
9 Ricciardo 56pts	20 Mazepin 0pts
10 Alonso 46pts	21 Kubica 0pts
11 Ocon 44pts	







FINISHING STRAIGHT

# RACE DEBRIEF

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 14

## THE ITALIAN GP IN 3 KEY MOMENTS



### 1 Hamilton and Verstappen collide in 'Silverstone part 2'

After a sequence of races where the title protagonists were kept apart, either by accidents (Hungaroring), rain (Spa) or sheer pace (Zandvoort), Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen collided at Monza, in what might be called part two of a row that has been simmering since they came to blows so spectacularly at Silverstone.

The first flashpoint came on lap one of the Italian GP, as Hamilton tried to pass Verstappen around the outside approaching the second chicane. Predictably, Max squeezed Lewis fully to the outside under braking, then choked off space in the middle of the complex, forcing Lewis to avoid contact by going off track. The stewards were fine with this.

The pitstop phase created the circumstance for the race's major incident. First, a slow stop for Verstappen as what Christian Horner called

"human error" kept Max stationary for 11 seconds while Red Bull confirmed the right-front wheel was correctly attached. Hamilton stopped two laps later, at the end of lap 24 of 53, and his switch from hard to medium Pirellis was a relatively pedestrian 4.2s.

Hamilton emerged as Lando Norris and Verstappen were arriving at the first chicane. Norris went by, but Verstappen was only partly alongside Lewis entering Turn 1. Hamilton put the squeeze on Verstappen and gave minimal ground through the middle of the chicane. Verstappen was never fully alongside, but there was a gap for his front wheels on the inside of Turn 2. He lunged for it, but struck the sausage kerb, bouncing him onto Hamilton's Mercedes and coming to rest with the Red Bull's right-rear wheel pushing the back of Hamilton's head after collapsing the W12's air intake.

Hamilton, who later complained of neck pain,

felt the halo "saved me and saved my neck" and called for "strict rules" to protect driver safety in wheel-to-wheel battles. He couldn't understand why Max didn't just bail out and cut the chicane. Max complained of being "squeezed" and not given enough space – ironic considering the way he's consistently chosen to yield as little as possible.

The stewards took a similar view to Hamilton's in the judgement that handed Verstappen a three-place grid drop for Sochi. They saw there was a clear way for Max to avoid contact, which he didn't take in the way Lewis did on lap one, so they judged Verstappen "predominantly to blame", using the same language as applied to Lewis at Silverstone.

Red Bull predictably disagreed, Horner calling it "a racing incident", but Red Bull at least accepted the decision, meaning there should be no repeat of



The sequel nobody wanted to see: Hamilton and Verstappen tangling at the first chicane

PICTURES: STEVEN TEE; MARK SUTTON; JERRY ANDRE; ZAK MAUGER; ANDY HONE



the ‘right to review’ we saw after Silverstone. What we can all agree on, in Toto Wolff’s words, is that “they need to find a way to race each other – leave space for each other, race hard, but avoid accidents. We don’t want to come to a situation to intervene when somebody gets really hurt”.

## 2 Ricciardo leads McLaren 1-2

The shenanigans between Hamilton and Verstappen left Daniel Ricciardo and Lando Norris clear to complete a memorable 1-2 result for McLaren, ending a win drought stretching back to the final grand prix of 2012.

The slippery aerodynamic profile of the MCL35, which bore such fruit in Austria, performed brilliantly again at Monza, where Norris and Ricciardo came within half a tenth of out-qualifying Verstappen’s Red Bull on Friday. The key for Ricciardo was a clean run past Hamilton off the start in Saturday’s Sprint, as Lewis defended against Norris, then another excellent getaway in the grand prix itself, which took Ricciardo past Verstappen.

Given the way the pitstops shook out so badly for Hamilton and Verstappen, regardless of their collision there’s a good chance neither would have repassed the McLarens given how fast they travelled down Monza’s straights. The strange thing is that Hamilton didn’t wait longer to make his pitstop and didn’t utilise the supposed advantage of starting on harder tyres.

In any case, this was a great result for McLaren – though team boss Andreas Seidl was pragmatic in the aftermath: “What I respect looking at Mercedes and Red Bull is that they have a car that can fight for the win every single weekend and that is the gap we have as a team compared to these guys, so I am not too focused on a 1-2 or whatever.

“It is a sensational result for us, but only seven



Bottas had a stellar weekend, winning the F1 Sprint and recovering from the back of the grid to finish third in the GP

days ago we got destroyed in Zandvoort, so that is the gap we still have to the top teams, and that is why we have to keep working hard to keep closing the gap in all kinds of circuits.”

## 3 ‘Poleman’ Bottas charges to podium

Valtteri Bottas produced what Mercedes called his best performance of the season so far to qualify fastest and win the second ever ‘F1 Sprint’ (as it is now definitively called). But an engine change after Friday practice relegated Bottas to the back row of the grid for the grand prix itself.

“There was an issue with the pneumatic side,” explained Mercedes engineering director Andrew Shovlin. “You can keep persevering with it, but if you don’t fix it, you end up with a problem in qualifying.”

Bottas charged back to fourth on the road, which became third when Sergio Pérez was penalised five seconds for going off track while overtaking Charles Leclerc’s Ferrari at the second chicane and not handing the place back, relegating the Red Bull to fifth in the classification.



Ricciardo was naturally over the moon at claiming his first win in McLaren’s colours

# RESULTS ROUND 14

MONZA / 12.9.21 / 53 LAPS



1st	Daniel Ricciardo	McLaren	1h21m54.365s
2nd	Lando Norris	McLaren	+1.747s
3rd	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	+4.921s
4th	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	+7.309s
5th	Sergio Pérez	Red Bull	+8.723s*
6th	Carlos Sainz	Ferrari	+10.535s
7th	Lance Stroll	Aston Martin	+15.804s
8th	Fernando Alonso	Alpine	+17.201s
9th	George Russell	Williams	+19.742s
10th	Esteban Ocon	Alpine	+20.868s
11th	Nicholas Latifi	Williams	+23.743s
12th	Sebastian Vettel	Aston Martin	+24.621s
13th	Antonio Giovinazzi	Alfa Romeo	+27.216s
14th	Robert Kubica	Alfa Romeo	+29.769s
15th	Mick Schumacher	Haas	+51.088s

### Retirements

Nikita Mazepin	Haas	41 laps - power unit
Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	25 laps - accident
Max Verstappen	Red Bull	25 laps - accident
Pierre Gasly	AlphaTauri	3 laps - suspension
Yuki Tsunoda	AlphaTauri	DNS - brakes

### Fastest lap

Daniel Ricciardo 1m24.812s on lap 53

### F1 Sprint - 18 laps

1st Bottas 2nd Verstappen 3rd Ricciardo

### TYRE COMPOUNDS USED

Hard (C2)	Medium (C3)	Soft (C4)	Inter	Wet

### CLIMATE



### AIR TEMP

30°C

### TRACK TEMP

40°C

### DRIVERS’ STANDINGS

1 Verstappen	226.5pts	11 Ocon	45pts
2 Hamilton	221.5pts	12 Vettel	35pts
3 Bottas	141pts	13 Stroll	24pts
4 Norris	132pts	13 Tsunoda	18pts
5 Pérez	118pts	15 Russell	15pts
6 Leclerc	104pts	16 Latifi	7pts
7 Sainz	97.5pts	17 Räikkönen	2pts
8 Ricciardo	83pts	18 Giovinazzi	1pt
9 Gasly	66pts	19 Schumacher	0pts
10 Alonso	50pts	20 Kubica	0pts
		21 Mazepin	0pts





# HUNGARY FOR MORE?

Just when the 2021 season couldn't get any crazier, **that** race happened in Hungary. The first lap pile-up, the Hamilton-Alonso duel, Ocon's first win... it was truly one for the history books.

But fans will know that the Hungaroring is exactly the circuit we'd expect to see this level of drama. Throughout its 30-year history in Formula 1, some of the sport's most iconic moves and races have taken place just outside Budapest – good job it's the perfect place to unwind after an epic Grand Prix...

Tickets are now on sale for next year's Hungarian Grand Prix, and here's why you should be there.



## DAZZLING DRAMA

No one will need reminding about Esteban Ocon's extraordinary win this season. He took advantage of the circumstances and converted his first-ever win. But the battle for the victory was happening behind him, as teammate Alonso fended off a fierce attack from Lewis Hamilton in the closing moments.

It's just one in a long line of memorable moments from the circuit: Nigel Mansell fought from P12 to win his finest race, Nelson Piquet pulled off one of the all-time great overtakes sliding his way around turn one, or Jenson Button's sensational win in the rain. So many moments that will go down in Formula 1 folklore have been produced on track at Hungary.



Nigel Mansell (Ferrari 640) leads Ayrton Senna (McLaren MP4-5 Honda) at The Hungaroring

## HISTORIC HUNGARORING

The circuit was borne out of Formula 1 wanting a race in the USSR, but instead, Hungary hosted the first Grand Prix behind the Iron Curtain. What resulted was the Hungaroring, just outside Budapest.

A fast, narrow, winding circuit that pushes the drivers to keep their car on absolute rails, and as such it is often described as "Monaco without the walls". And it's a challenging drive, but one where some of the greats have made their names. Damon Hill, Fernando Alonso, Jenson Button and Esteban Ocon have all scored their maiden wins here, and there's been plenty of action along the way...

## BRILLIANT BUDAPEST

The Hungaroring is under an hour away from the Hungarian capital Budapest, making it perfect for a short city break.

You might want to sightsee along the Danube River, taking in the historic Chain Bridge and Buda Castle. Or, you'll want to explore the buzzing nightlife like the incredibly cool 'ruin bars' – pubs built inside neglected pre-war buildings.

Whatever you decide, you'll have as much fun away from the track as you will in the grandstands.

Visit:

[MOTORSPORTTICKETS.COM/HUNGARY22](https://motorsporttickets.com/hungary22)

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FINISHING STRAIGHT

## RACE PREVIEW

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 15

## RUSSIAN GP

24-26 September 2021  
Sochi Autodrom

PICTURES: ANDY HONE; STEVE ETHERINGTON; ILLUSTRATIONS: ALAN ELDREDGE



## RACE DATA

**Venue** Sochi Autodrom**First GP** 2014**Number of laps** 53**Circuit length** 3.636 miles**Race distance** 192.708 miles**Lap record** 1m35.761s

Lewis Hamilton (2019)

**F1 races held** 7**Winners from pole** 2**Pirelli compounds** C3, C4, C5

## CAR PERFORMANCE

**Downforce level** Medium**Cooling requirement** Low**Full throttle** 51%**Top speed** 213mph**Average speed** 136mph

## TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

**Friday** 24 September**Practice 1** 09:30-10:30**Practice 2** 13:00-14:00**Saturday** 25 September**Practice 3** 10:00-11:00**Qualifying** 13:00-14:00**Sunday** 26 September**Race** 13:00**Live coverage** Sky Sports F1**Highlights** Channel 4

## THE MAIN EVENT

**Now looking towards** the off-ramp as plans are drawn up to relocate the Russian GP to the Igora Drive circuit near St Petersburg, Sochi theoretically begins the 2021 season's post-summer flyaway leg. Popularised by Joseph Stalin in the middle of the last century, this is a popular resort with a peculiar climate which enables visitors to choose between sunbathing on the beach or skiing in the nearby mountains.

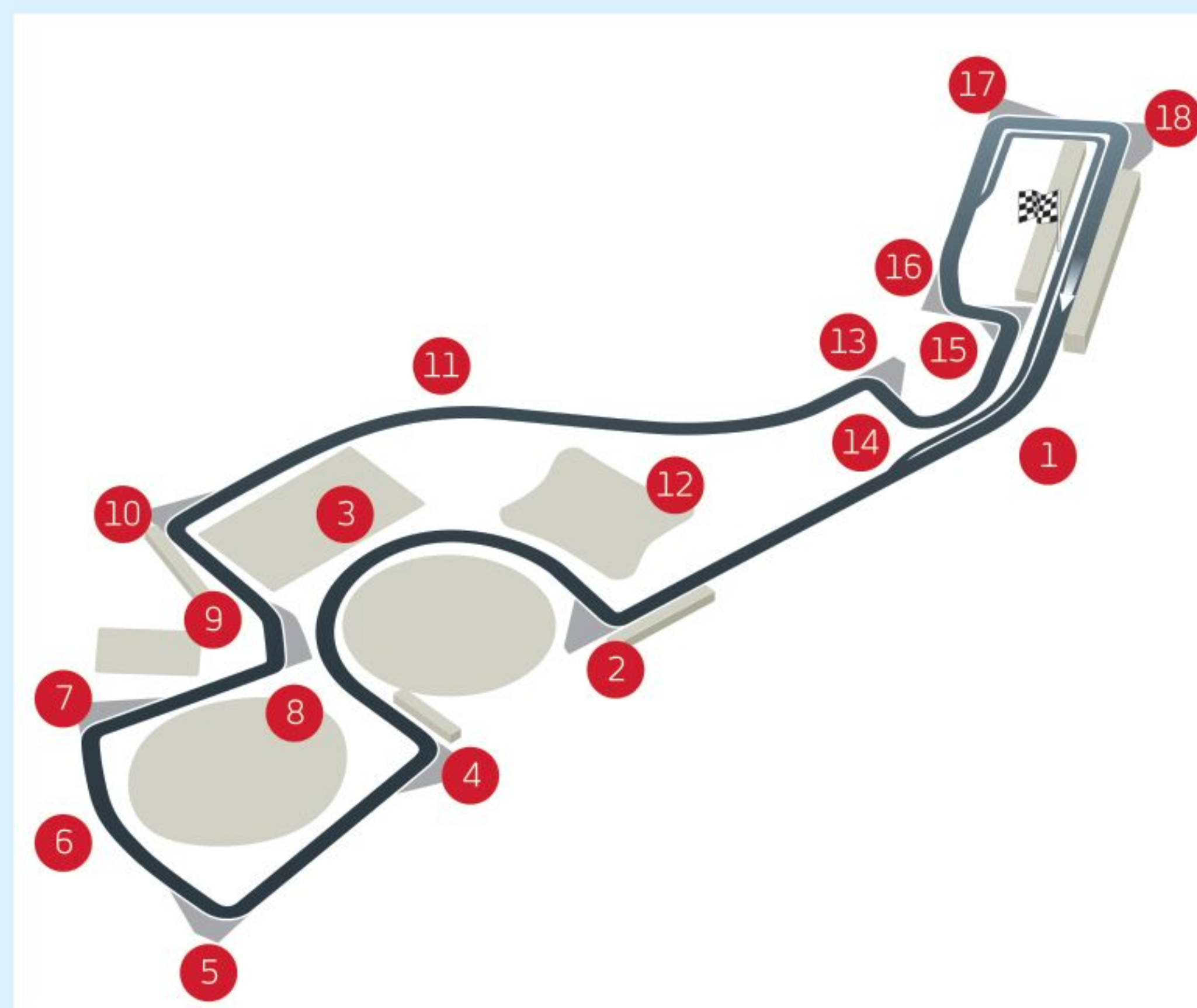
The track loops around and between venues used for the 2014 Winter Olympics. The constraints of the location explain but do not excuse a largely insipid layout which makes for processional racing, although the track is relatively unusual in that the second rather than the first corner is a key overtaking point after the race start.

## 2020 RACE RECAP

Valtteri Bottas delivered a jolt in the arm to his fading title hopes with victory – and fired a shot against his critics with another “to whom it may concern” message over team radio. Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton started on pole but was penalised for making two practice starts outside the pit exit during his reconnaissance laps to the grid.

Hamilton was already starting on the disadvantageous soft tyre after a slip-up in Q2 but his two five-second penalties rendered the strategic implications academic. Starting on mediums, Bottas moved into the lead when Hamilton stopped for tyres and to serve his penalties. After switching to hard-compound Pirellis, Bottas maintained his lead over Max Verstappen as Hamilton fought back to third.

**KEY CORNER: TURN 2** Since Turn 1 is ‘merely’ a kink, the sharp right-hander at Turn 2 concentrates the mind – particularly on the opening lap, where the slipstream gives following drivers an advantage.



## THE WINNERS HERE...



2020

Valtteri  
Bottas  
Mercedes

2019

Lewis  
Hamilton  
Mercedes

2018

Lewis  
Hamilton  
Mercedes

2017

Valtteri  
Bottas  
Mercedes

2016

Nico  
Rosberg  
Mercedes





FINISHING STRAIGHT

# RACE PREVIEW

F1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 16

# TURKISH GP

8-10 October 2021  
Istanbul Park



## RACE DATA

**Venue** Istanbul Park

**First GP** 2005

**Number of laps** 58

**Circuit length** 3.314 miles

**Race distance** 192.25 miles

**Lap record** 1m24.770s

Juan Pablo Montoya (2005)

**F1 races held** 8

**Winners from pole** 5

**Pirelli compounds** C2,C3,C4

## CAR PERFORMANCE

**Downforce level** High

**Cooling requirement** High

**Full throttle** 66%

**Top speed** 199mph

**Average speed** 110mph

## TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

**Friday** 8 October

**Practice 1** 09:00-10:00

**Practice 2** 13:00-14:00

**Saturday** 9 October

**Practice 3** 10:00-11:00

**Qualifying** 13:00-14:00

**Sunday** 10 October

**Race** 11:00

**Live coverage** Sky Sports F1

**Highlights** Channel 4

## THE MAIN EVENT

**Back on F1's radar** owing to the pandemic, Istanbul Park returned to the calendar after a nine-year hiatus in 2020 – and a harum-scarem grand prix ensued after the promoter had the entire track resurfaced ahead of the event. That should have been it for Turkey, but coronavirus chaos has furnished another chance to host and Istanbul Park, after first being lined up to replace Canada, then Singapore, now slots into the date vacated by the cancelled Japanese GP.

One of Hermann Tilke's better efforts, Istanbul Park features the iconic multi-apex, high-speed Turn 8. Although this one is for the benefit of the drivers and connoisseurs of in-car footage, because other areas of the track are better for racing in terms of overtaking opportunities.

## 2020 RACE RECAP

On a new surface rendered even less grippy by rain, Lance Stroll claimed his maiden pole for Racing Point and led much of the race with team-mate Sergio Pérez on his tail. It never dried enough for slicks, and Lewis Hamilton fought back to win after starting from sixth, rising to third on the opening lap, then slewing off-track and dropping back to sixth. From then on Hamilton was peerless, stopping just once for another set of intermediates.

Stroll fell back after apparently losing downforce to front-wing damage, which caused him to root his second set of tyres. Pérez lost second to Charles Leclerc on the final lap, only to regain it when the Ferrari went off at Turn 12. Hamilton's win put his seventh world title beyond doubt.

**KEY CORNER: TURN 12** A hard stop at the end of a long, kinked straight, Turn 12 is a frequent action area. Get it even slightly wrong and you're compromised for the right-left which follows.



## THE WINNERS HERE...



2020

Lewis  
Hamilton  
Mercedes



2011

Sebastian  
Vettel  
Red Bull



2010

Lewis  
Hamilton  
McLaren



2009

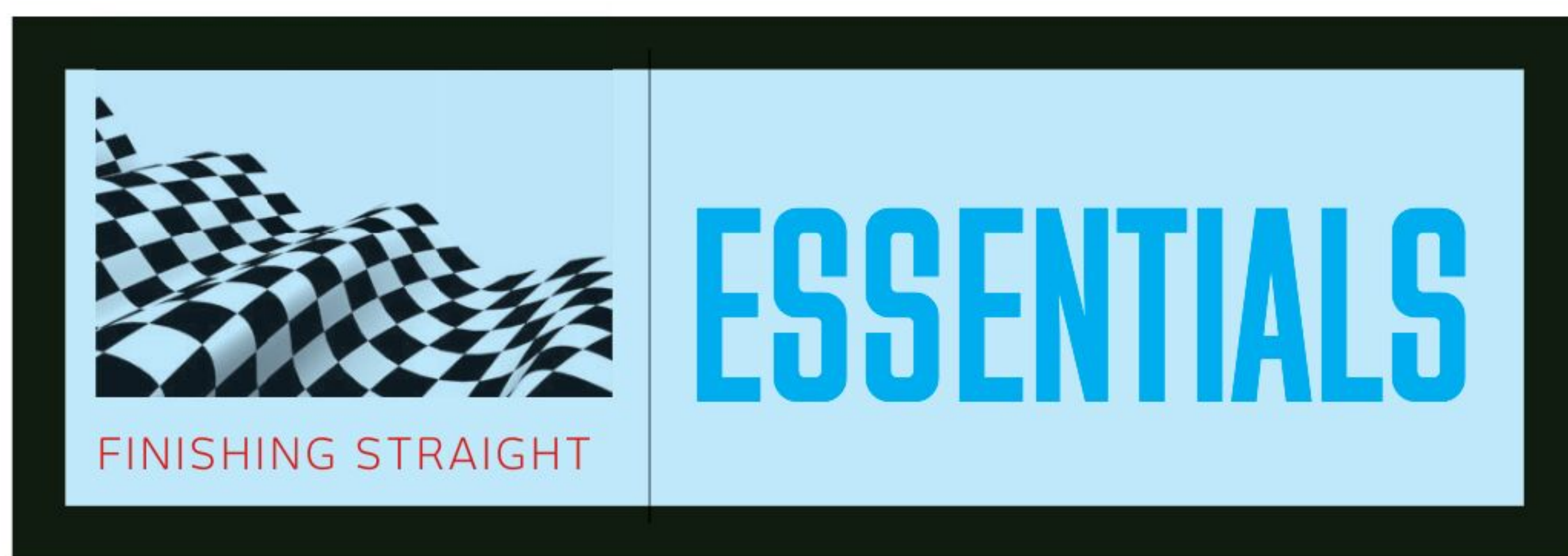
Jenson  
Button  
Brawn



2008

Felipe  
Massa  
Ferrari





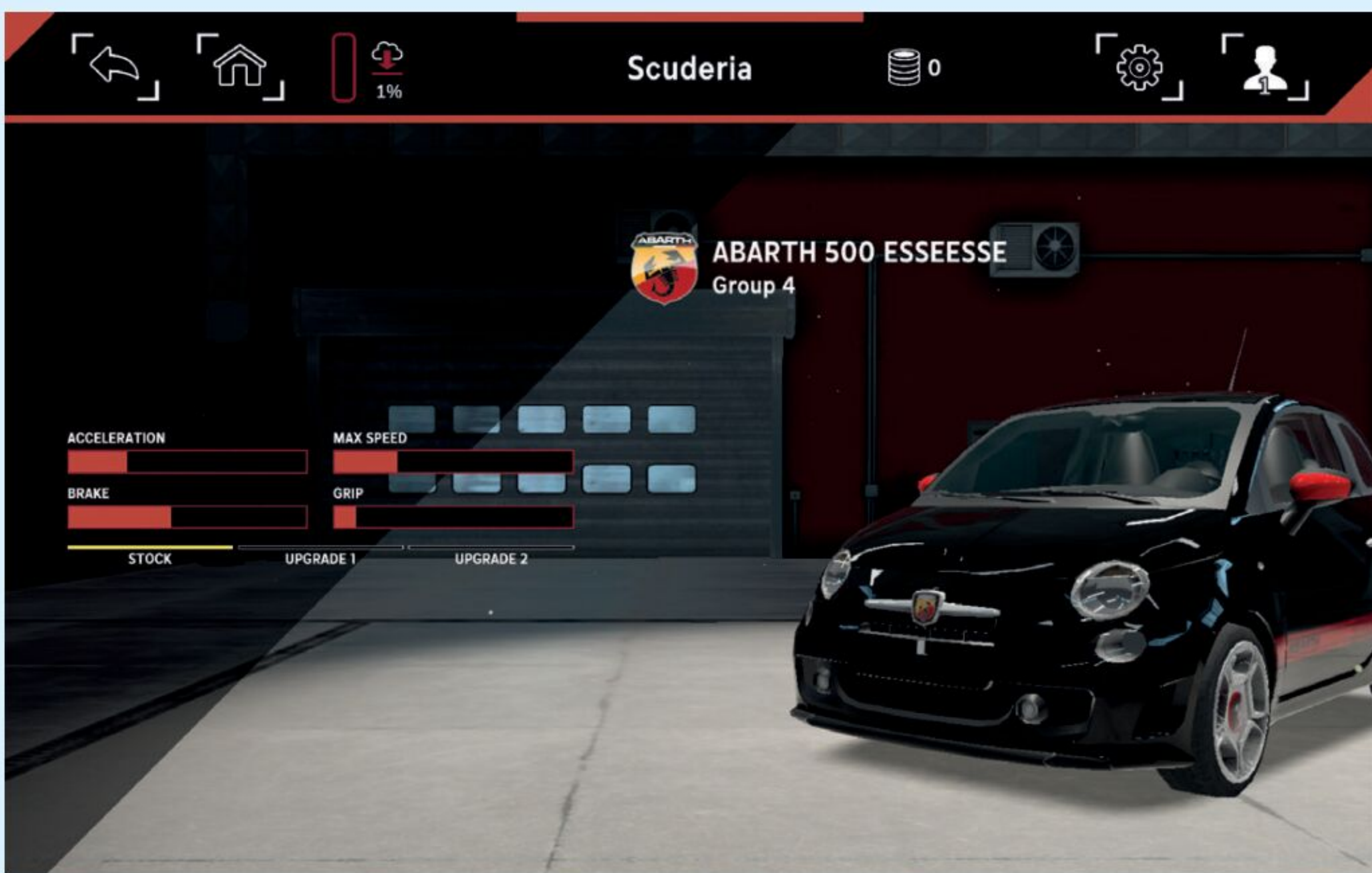
# F1 UPGRADES

Enhance the F1 experience with the latest must-have products

**JAGUAR CENTURY**  
**Author** Giles Chapman  
**Price** £60  
[quartoknows.com](http://quartoknows.com)

Next year is the centenary of the venerable marque which began life as the Swallow Sidecar Company, established by William Lyons and William Walmsley. It became a visionary automotive brand, navigated the economic privations of the early 1930s and the postwar years, and enjoyed success on track, pioneering the use of disc brakes in its sportscar campaigns. The 1935 SS and 1961 E-Type are among the most

elegant examples of their genre. Author Giles Chapman is a former editor of *GP Racing's* sometime sister title *Classic & Sports Car*, and over the course of this lavishly illustrated tome – which comes packaged in a slip case – he focuses on the road car side of the business. There's plenty on the Le Mans campaigns of the 1950s and 1980s but Chapman wisely steers around the risible F1 effort at the turn of the century.



**ASSETTO CORSA MOBILE**  
**Price** £4.95  
[505games.com](http://505games.com)

The Assetto Corsa franchise is rightly exalted by gamers and sim aficionados as one of the most intense and realistic racing sims, particularly the most recent Assetto Corsa Competizione iteration. The mobile version, available for iOS devices only, obviously has to make some sacrifices in realism and graphical fidelity given the limitations of the hardware and its control interfaces. As such, while the appeal of the PC version lies in being able to drive painstakingly accurate virtual

recreations of a wide variety of cars from many different eras, Assetto Corsa Mobile focuses around a console-style 'career mode' where players unlock extra content by winning races and challenges. There are nine circuits and 59 licenced cars to go through, although fans of the PC and console original will feel constrained by the absence of mods. The controls will also take a bit of getting used to if you're coming from a full sim rig – but it's not like you can take that on a train...





## THRUSTMASTER T248

**Price** £299.99

[thrustmaster.com](http://thrustmaster.com)

Thrustmaster's force-feedback steering wheels are rightly popular in the gaming sim racing fraternity, and the new T248 features a number of performance upgrades including a more powerful motor and an LCD dash readout which offers an extra level of immersion and realism.

Officially licensed for PlayStation 4 and 5, the Thrustmaster T248 is plug-and-play straight out of the box when mated to Sony's consoles. It's also compatible with Windows 10 PCs, and an Xbox version is expected

before the end of the year.

Force-feedback mechanisms go beyond the 'rumble' systems found in entry-level controllers, replicating the changing weight of the steering a driver would feel while braking, accelerating and cornering in a real race car. They also simulate the vibration and kickback that would come through the wheel over kerbs and as the front wheels wash into understeer. Thrustmaster's Hybrid Drive force-feedback system is a hybrid of belt and gear-driven

underpinnings and the motor in the T248 is claimed to be 70% more powerful than the equivalent in Thrustmaster's popular T150/TMX wheel, peaking at 96W.

The three-spoke wheel is lined with foam-filled leather rather than rubber to more accurately mimic the tactile feel of a real racing car's wheel, and the magnetic actuation of the paddle-shift mechanism behind the wheel is much closer to the real thing than microswitches. All the necessary clamps to attach the wheel to a

desk or table are included, but this is a serious piece of equipment best installed in a dedicated rig or cockpit. The new T3PM pedal set offers four different resistance profiles via springs included in the box.

The T248 wheel also introduces features usually associated with higher-end products, including customisable encoder switches and a digital telemetry display which can show gears, revs, lap times and other data. It's compatible with F1 2021 and a growing list of other games.





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# THE FINAL LAP

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## NOTHING FOR FANS AT SPA TO LAUGH ABOUT

**GP Racing readers who listen** to the BBC Radio 4 comedy panel show *I'm Sorry I Haven't A Clue* will no doubt be familiar with *Mornington Crescent*, the spoof game in which guests maintain a fiction of intensely strategic play when in fact they are merely calling out the names of tube stations. A similar feeling of improvisation pervaded that grim Sunday afternoon at Spa-Francorchamps, albeit with fewer laughs.

As the rain teemed down, we were even treated to a few moments of pantomime as Red Bull sought permission to fix Sergio Pérez's shunted RB16B – with rather less audience participation, the hardy trackside spectators being more engaged with the possibility of developing trench foot. Had the race actually started? "Oh no it hasn't!" cried Red Bull team manager Jonathan Wheatley. "Oh yes it has!" rejoined his Mercedes counterpart Ron Meadows.

Later, as the light died over the circuit and the disappointed spectators trudged homeward

through the Stygian murk, the recriminations began – in tandem with the various stakeholders performing an unedifying dance to avoid taking responsibility for the entire tawdry farrago. Indubitably the conditions were such that it was too dangerous to race throughout the afternoon, and visibility too poor in the spray to trundle around behind the Safety Car in the hope that enough water would eventually be displaced. But it's also right that we interrogate the decisions and the rules which informed them so that a repeat of this folly can be avoided.

One of Liberty Media's first acts upon acquiring F1's commercial rights was to move qualifying and

**Fans who spent hours in the rain to see three laps behind the Safety Car will be hoping for some recompense for their efforts...**



race starts later in the day, for the convenience of US viewers. While it would be a footling act of hindsight to suggest an earlier start would have solved the problem, later starts afford less wriggle room when the weather is sub-optimal. And it was tiresome to hear F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali in sloping-shoulders mode after the 'race' saying an earlier start would have been the stewards' call rather than F1's.

Tiresome, too, to see F1 cynically redacting Lewis Hamilton's post-race comments in which he expressed frustration that a result had been declared after no racing, that the decision was influenced by commercial priorities, and that the spectators should get a refund. Not a word of that made it into the happy-clappy "Lewis praises the fans" story which appeared on F1's website. This is the kind of disingenuous bilge one would expect from North Korean state media.

**THIS IS THE KIND OF DISINGENUOUS BILGE ONE WOULD EXPECT FROM NORTH KOREAN STATE MEDIA**

The proviso that a result can be declared and half points awarded after just two laps has been sitting in the rulebook for at least four decades, but only now have circumstances created scrutiny. FIA race director Michael Masi insists the attempt to start the race was genuine, based on a forecast of the rain easing. Domenicali says F1 would have received its sanctioning fee even if there was no race, and denies this was a factor in the decision-making process: "When I hear there was some commercial discussion behind that, it's totally not true."

But Domenicali also said it was up to the promoter to give fans a refund – or, in his words, "some attention". The same promoter, that is, who has just had to pay through the nose for hosting what was in effect a non-event. F1 subsequently backtracked, saying it was "working through various options" with the promoter.

It's a pity that many of the fans present endured hideous conditions in the hope of witnessing a Max Verstappen victory at one of F1's classic drivers' circuits. They got that, but not in the manner he or they would have wished. What those fans deserve now is a pat on the back, not a slap in the face from the clunking fist of venture capitalism.

**GP Racing has a podcast!**

Search for 'Flat Chat with Codders' in your podcasting platform of choice.

PICTURE: MARK SUTTON. ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENJE



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